A RETRACTATION OF SEPARATION.

WHEREIN

VI Arguments formerly erected for the service of *Separation*, upon the account of *Infant Baptisme*, are taken down:

AND

VI Other Arguments for Saints generall communion, though of different perswasion, are erected in their room.

TOGETHER WITH

A patheticall Swasive to unity, peace, and concord, as our generation-work in speciall.

By WILLIAM ALLEN.

When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren, Luk. 22. 32.
Goe ye and learne what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, Mat. 9. 13.
Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, Phil. 3. 16.
Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, Ro: 14. 19.

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A
RETRACTATION
OF
SEPARATION.

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To the godly READERS, both *Anabaptists* and *Pedobaptists*.

THe scope of this little piece being in speciall to close the wound of division that hath been made in the Church of God about Baptism, I shall here offer a word to both parts divided. First, to the Anabaptists; for so I call them, as being that name whether proper or improper, by which they are best knowne among men. That which I would briefly say to them, partly respects their opinion, and partly their separation about it.

My humble request to them; First is, That their dissent from other godly Christians in the point of Infant Baptisme, may be held and managed with much humility and sobriety towards them that differ. That reverence which is due to the wisdome, godlinesse, faithfulnesse and zeal of so great a number as in former ages have been, and in this present age are of a minde different from them in this point, calls for it. The sence of their owne weaknesse, and that they are no more infallible then other men, calls for it. And the peace and undisturbed state of the Church and people of God, which every Christian is bound as much as in him lies to preserve, calls for it likewise.

As for those of them that judge it their duty to uphold a separate state upon account of this difference; my humble motion to them is, That they would read the ensuing Discourse, or any other of like nature, with an open and free minde, and with that inclination to unity, peace, and concord, that ought to rule in the

hearts of all Saints: and to give the arguments and considerations which oppose Separation, *the same law and faire play in their judgements, which they have been wont to allow to their contrary: and that they would make as much, if not much more, conscience to lay out and engage their thoughts how to remove objections against generall communion of Saints, as to make them. Certainly the great cry of the Scripture for unity, peace, concord, and forbearance among Saints, and against their dissentions and divisions, and the experience of their ill effects, is a lowd call to this. And so is the law of true Evangelicall brotherly love, and the principle of it, in whomsoever found, which is still working, if not obstructed, towards a kindly closure with all that have the like precious faith, and seed of God, remaining in them, and which makes them desirous and glad of any helpe to remove out of the way, what ever keepes them from the closest communion.*

And for those that are or shall be convinced of the undueneſſe of this Separation; *and yet for fear of offending the weake, conceal their Judgement; my desire and advice is, that they would set before them the blame which the Apostle* Peter *incurred by dissembling his Judgement for fear of offending that sort of believers which were of the Circumcision,* Gal: 2. 11, 12, 13. *besides the account which I afterwards give, of my owne practice in the contrary.*

My prayer on the other hand to the godly Pedobaptists, *both Ministers and people, is, That they would use like moderation and tenderneſſe towards the godly* Anabaptists: *and not for their different opinion sake in point of* Baptisme, *to set them at naught, and represent them to the people, and that without distinction, as such monsters as some doe; nor to make an estimate or representation of the best by the worst, (there being ever as much difference between* Anabaptists *and* Anabaptists, *as there is between* Pedobaptists *and* Pedobaptists;) *but to think and speak of them as such, who for a considerable part of them, at least, are truely tender of the glory of the Lord, and of the royall authority of his holy Lawes; and as desirous to approve themselves with all good conscience both to God and men; and as such among whom there are as savoury and experimentall Christians,*

as

as most in their generation. The want of this moderation in many of the Pedobaptists, *I believe hath had a great hand in the divisions and separations of our times; partly by setting them of the other Judgement at a further distance from them then otherwise they would have been; and partly by inclining many who have thought them wronged, to fall in with them and off from the other.*

Suppose the Anabaptists *should be in an errour: yet certainly their opinion about* Baptisme *after faith, cannot reasonably be supposed to be of that nature, if it should be an errour, but that it may well consist with an eminent degree of grace, as many I doubt not of different thoughts from them, doe sufficiently experience. And with what heart then can any who know the worth of grace, and how to value persons by it, make such to be a gazing stock to the people, for a supposed infirmity in judgement? Besides; the strong probabilities (not now to say proofes) which they have for their opinion; may well bespeake a moderate and sober treatment, from such as dissent. As to matter of fact: what can be said to evince* Infant Baptisme *a primitive practice, but may be so farre counter-argued, as to leave an enlightened and tender conscience, without conviction in the case? And as to the reason of the thing: when it shall be argued that to be baptized, is to be buried; and that buriall betokens or supposeth the person buried, to be dead,* viz. *unto sin; and how incompetent such a death is to an infant state; and how preposterous it is to bury persons before they are dead: is it not very possible that when all is said that can be said to take away the strength of such a consideration, that yet so much may be apprehended to remayne, by many a wise and holy man, as may hold his conscience fast? And therefore why should such an opinion that hath so much to be said for it, and hard to be answered, render its friends so criminall in the eyes, in the reports of their brethren, as sometimes it does? Or if some that be of that opinion, have espoused any other opinions of worse import; yet why should this be charged upon the whole Tribe? See* Revel. 2. 24. & 3. 4.

In a word; if the godly Pedobaptists *and* Anabaptists, *would*

would but charitably consider what each plead for themselves, and would but have their eyes more upon what is lovely and desireable in each other, and be ready to owne and acknowledge it, and to provide a covering for each others infirmities, (which yet would be no works of supererogation, but their duty;) how soon would they delight in one another, and come closer together, and serve the Lord with one shoulder? and if those of each subdivision among themselves, would doe so too; what a heaven upon earth should we have in comparison of what now we have? But if each shall still abound in their owne sence, and impose that sence upon one another; and shall still be laying their fingers upon each others sores, and aggravating every small matter, and construing things in the worst sence, and harbouring jealousies and evil surmisings against one another, where there is no visible ground; and in the mean while over-look the praise-worthy things that are visible enough in many on both sides; what can be expected but the banishing of charity, and with it peace and the holy Spirit, but the increase of emulations, contentions, divisions, and with these errour, heresie, and apostacie, untill we have so farre devoured one another, and our religion too, as at last to expose our selves and our profession, Gospel, Ordinances and liberties, as a prey to the common Enemy, whose hopes and endeavours of swallowing up all, are doubtlesse nourished and strengthened by our divisions. And what christian heart can beare the thought of being accessary to such things as these?

Where then there is any true affection left to the interest of Christ, and safety of souls; which are already so farre endumaged and further endangered by the uncharitable contentions and divisions of professors; let it shew it selfe by a speedy and compassionate endeavour to finde out wayes and to improve opportunities of reconciling dissenting brethren, upon the account of those many and mayne things of faith and holinesse, wherein they are already one, and which in reason should sway more to hold them fast together, then those few and farre lesser things wherein they differ, should to divide, scatter, and alienate them one from another. And so they would if there were no selfe-interest, or ignorance about the doctrine of forbearance, or pride, or uncharitableneſſe,

nesse, to hinder it; which Christians should abhorre, not cherish. Alas, shall the sword alwayes devour? *is* there no balm in Gilead? is there no Phycian there? *must we sit downe in despair? or must we waite on miracles to make Gods people one? Surely if mens eyes were but a little more open, every one to see their owne sin in making, or not cordially endeavouring the cure of our breaches; reconciliation would be found a work of no such difficulty to effect among those that are steered by Christs interest, (and those that are not, let them be left out, they will but retard the work;) for they would be so much ashamed of this sin, and the dis-service they have done Christ by it, as that they would not be able to refraine mutuall endeavours on every hand to quench the flame that is kindled in the house of God, and to call upon one another to joyne herein. There's now some hopefull dawnings of such a day by agitations now on foot; yet if while the Sun is but peeping out of one cloud, another should come over it; let no mans heart or hand be weakened upon that account: if you will but follow after peace with all your might, you shall certainly at last over-take it and bring it back again: and I am sure, its company worth running for.* Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another, *Rom:* 14. 19.

Septemb. 5th 1659.

W. A.

A Retractation of Separation.

THe moſt wiſe and holy God, at firſt made and diſpoſed all his creatures in ſuch ſubordination and order, as that no diviſion either did or could befall them, through any defect in his workmanſhip. But the Devill, the originall Author and founder of diviſion and ſinfull ſeparation, having himſelfe firſt left his own place where God had ſet him, became head of a faction againſt God; and from that day to this, hath induſtriouſly endeavoured to work diviſion between God and men, and among men themſelves. And *for this cauſe was Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, made manifeſt, that he might deſtroy the works of the Devil*; and counter-work him, in reconciling men to God, and one to another. And therefore the cloſer men doe follow Chriſt, and the more they are acted by his Spirit, the more they are for unity and concord; for healing of breaches: and reconciling of divided parties. As on the other hand; the more men are acted and influenced by the ſpirit of Satan, the more they are for dividing worke. For theſe two Princes, the one of light, the other of darkneſſe, carry on their two contrary works of diviſion and union, by the agency of their followers.

And yet the Devil does not carry on this work only by ſuch as are his, but ſo out-wits many well meaning men that deſigne ſerving of Chriſt and promoting of truth in the maine, as to make them think they are building up Gods truth and worſhip by ſeparation, when they are pulling downe his houſe which is the pillar thereof, by diviſion: and ſo do really accomodate the Devils deſigne, whilſt they intend the advancement of the cauſe of Chriſt. They think that ſome one particular truth

which they apprehend to have discovered, will not be seen enough in a croud of the contrary minded, (though of the same alliance to Christ) and therefore they get out of their company, that by the light of their separation, that truth for which they doe separate, might be the better seen and the more taken notice of, and the more prized, whilst communion with them, cannot be had without it. But in the meane while they are not aware how they hinder Christs work, while they intend to promote it, and befriend the Devils designe, whilst they intend to withstand it.

1. In hindering the reception of that truth if it be a truth, which they intend to propagate. For by such a separation, they render themselves lesse acceptable to them from whom they withdraw, then they were before, and more suspected too: and so are at a greater disadvantage to commend any truth to them, then they were before: Prejudice against the Preacher, begetting prejudice against his doctrine. For which cause also, all their other Christian applications to them will be lesse acceptable and lesse effectuall, unlesse there be a bundance of grace to prevent it; it faring with them in this case as it doth many times with men who take a kinde of conceit against good meat, for the unacceptablenesse of the vessell in which it is dressed, or dish in which its brought: that's one way by which unawares, as I conceive, they gratifie the enemy.

2. By such divisions and separations of one part of Gods people from another, they lay themselves open, and become obnoxious to the temptations and surprisall of the enemy. Their strength to withstand the enemy, lies under God in their union and association. When the Apostle exhorts the Christians (*Phil.* 1. 27.) to stand fast and to maintaine their ground against the enemy, he immediately directs them to [*strive together*] *for the faith of the Gospel. And if one prevaile, yet two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord, is not easily broken, Eccl.* 4. 12. But by dividing and separating, they loose their strength, and become a prey to the enemy. *Gen.* 49 7. *I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel:* dividing makes way for scattering and overcoming. How easie a matter is it for

for an enemy by his united force to ſubdue the greateſt Armie when they ſhall fight him only in ſmall parties? he will firſt overcome one partie and then another, and ſo all one after another. And that doubtleſſe is the reaſon why the enemy hath ſo mightily prevailed, and taken ſo many that did wear Chriſts colours, priſoners, and led them away captive under the power and command of many dangerous and deſtroying errors and hereſies, ſince thoſe unhappie diviſions and ſeparations among the people of God, have broken out and ſo abounded in this Nation. And therefore I conceive that upon true account it will be found, that where the enemy hath drawne away one other perſon to become a *Quaker*, or a *Ranter*, or the like, he hath drawne away many of thoſe that upon one account or other, had before ſeparated themſelves in their communion, from a great part of the people of God. As ſtraglers from an Army uſe to fall into the hands of the enemy, when thoſe that abide in the mayne body are ſafe; even ſo is it with thoſe that ſtragle from the mayne body of Chriſt the univerſall Church in their communion, they are gathered up by the enemy, here one and there one, when in the meane while thoſe that abide and keep their ranckes in the mayne body, are more generally kept ſafe. Doubtleſſe its not much leſſe dangerous for Saints to ſeparate from Saints upon account of their differences, conſidering what advantage is given the enemy thereby, then it would be for an Army who all engage for the ſame cauſe in the maine, to divide and part upon account of difference among them about wearing of Colours, or ordering themſelves, when they have a potent and reſolved enemy in the field ready to fight them.

For beſides the danger already hinted, by ſuch ſeparation they take courſe to diſ-arme themſelves, at leaſt in great meaſure, and to put weapons into the enemies hand. Chriſtian Charity is in great part a Chriſtians ſecurity; and the ſeparation I ſpeake of, tends greatly to weaken and by degrees to deſtroy that charity, as I ſhall ſhew afterward. To what degree the enemy draws any of us out of Chriſtian charity, he draws us out of our ſtrong hold and place of ſecurity. *If we love one ano-*

ther; *God dwelleth in us*, ſaith the Apoſtle: *and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, (1 John 4. 12, 16.) and therefore muſt needs be ſafe. If God dwell in him, it is to govern and guide him, to ſupport and uphold him, to ſave and defend him. Where God dwells, light and ſtrength dwells. *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occaſion of ſtumbling in him*, 1 John 2. 10. But uncharitableneſſe is quite contrary to God who is love, and where that dwells, he takes no pleaſure to dwell: and if he who is the Chriſtians ſafety, ſtrength and guide, be but withdrawne; what can be expected but darkneſſe, weakneſſe, wandering, and the enemies entering and taking poſſeſſion? *He that hateth his brother, is in darkneſſe, and walketh in darkneſſe, and knoweth not whither he goeth, becauſe darkneſſe hath blinded his eyes*, 1 *John* 2. 11. Uncharitableneſſe, then, deprives men of Gods preſence, which is their only ſafety, and makes way for the enemy, and ſo betrayes them into the hand of errour and deluſion. *The end of the Commandement* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *is charity, from which ſome having ſwerved, have turned aſide to vain jangling*, 1 Tim. 1. 5, 6. Turning aſide to vain jangling, is that which follows the ſwerving from charity. As love departs, ſo jangling, errour and confuſion takes place. 1 *Cor.* 11. 18, 19. *I hear there are diviſions among you, and I partly believe it: for there muſt be alſo hereſies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifeſt*. The Apoſtle knowing there muſt come hereſies among them, was eaſily induced to believe the report that brought him news of the diviſions in that Church; as looking upon thoſe, but as preparing and making way for the other. If you hear of much contention among brethren, once, for want of charity, expect to hear of hereſies among them ere long. Seaſons of uncharitable contentions among Chriſtian brethren, are gainfull advantages for the Devil to deceive in. Mark and conſider that Propheſie of Chriſt; *Mat.* 24, 10, 11, 12. *Then ſhall many be offended and ſhall betray one another, and ſhall hate one another. And many falſe Prophets ſhall riſe and ſhall deceive many*. When Chriſts followers fall a hating and ſo a betraying one another, then the Devil ſends forth his Pro-

Prophets as the fittest season possible to carry away many of those which were growne in distast with their godly brethren. *And because iniquity* in this kinde, *shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*, ver. 12. A great decay of affection to the Gospel takes place, when uncharitablenesse, errour, and Apostacy among the professors thereof, doth abound. And may not I say as Christ in another case sometimes said? *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.* For when the godly among the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, and Anabaptists, fell to siding, party against party; and envie, emmulations, and uncharitablenesse increased, then the Devill thrusts out a great variety of seducers that have carryed away many into wayes of dangerous errour, especially of those that have proceeded furthest in separation by several subdivisions. Though God hath in the meane while graciously kept such as have retained a generall love to all the people of God, and have managed their differences with more moderation.

3. Another way by which Separation of Saints from Saints furthers Satans and hinders Christs designe, (what ever they themselves designe by it) is in hindering the successe of the Gospel in its converting work. For by it unbelefe of the Gospel in ungodly men, is nourished and maintained. The Saints differences, though but in some lesser matters, when made so publique and notorious by separations, doe gratifie the unbelieving thoughts which sinfull men have, as if the Gospel were an uncertain thing. When they see those that pretend to so much knowledge of it, to disagree in matters so materiall, as those that concern their owning one another as Christian Brethren, they think (its like) that they may suspend a thorow belefe of the whole. Christ prayed that all those that should believe through his Apostles word, might *be one, that the world might believe*, John 17 21. They are those that bear witnesse before the world that the Gospel is true: but to what degree (as in all Courts) the witnesses disagree; their testimony is weakened, and their evidence suspected. When their Trumpet by which they should alarum the world, gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himselfe to the battell? They know

know not what religion to be of, they ſay, and will ſee profeſſors better agreed, before they will be reſolvedly and thorowly of any. It was the Devils policie of old to raiſe up falſe Prophets in oppoſition to the true, that while one ſaid one thing, and another another thing in the name of the Lord, the ignorant people might be amuſed, and not know which to follow. And its much to be feared, that he gaines much of the ſame advantage by the declared publiſhed contradictions among the Saints. Hence is the common complaint touching the paucity of converts, now adayes. There's much preaching and much diſcourſive knowledge, but how rare are thoſe effectuall converſions that the Word accompanied with the peace, charity, and ſincerity of Saints in former times, did produce. Now indeed men are converted from one opinion in Religion to another; but to have ſtout-hearted ſinners to fall at the feet of Jeſus Chriſt by the power of his Word, and giant-like tranſgreſſors to become like weaned children, I believe (and its not my thought alone) is a ſight farre more rare to behold now, then formerly. And why? Surely not becauſe the Word is leſſe quick and powerfull now then it was then; but becauſe its now more hindered, and clogged by the diviſions, ſeparations, and contrary opinions of profeſſors, and ſcandalls concurring, then formerly it was.

And as theſe diviſions and ſeparations have hindered the converſion of ſome, ſo doubtleſſe have they occaſioned the ſubverſion of many others, who have ſtumbled at this ſtumbling ſtone, and forſaken the tents of the Saints of all perſwaſions; turning, ſome Quakers, ſome Ranters, and Libertines, ſome Papiſts, and ſome Atheiſts. Papiſts and Atheiſts there were befor, but for ſtrict profeſſors of godlineſs to become ſuch, was, I think, ſeldome ſeen before. The frequent interreſſing the weake in doubtfull diſputations, hath been like the putting of new wine into old bottles, or the ſewing of a new piece of cloth to an old garment; the wine hath been ſpilt, and the rent made worſe: their heads have turned round with the noiſe of abundance of contrary arguings, of which they have not been able to make judgement. And upon that account have been

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tempted to taſt of every water, to be experiencing every way; trying every thing, till at laſt they have come to nothing. Such open and violent ſtrivings about things of doubtfull diſputations, as to ſet one Chriſtian at a diſtance from another, hath proved a ſad occaſion of ſubverting the hearers, 2 *Tim.* 2. 14.

Theſe and ſuch like have been the effects of the late yeares diviſions and ſeparations of Saints, though better things then theſe, I doubt not, have been intended by them. And if there hath been any diſcovery of truth by our contendings; yet I doubt by the ill managing of our differences, if the account could be caſt up, the loſſe in the totall, in relation to the affaires of Chriſt, would be found much more then the gaine. And I muſt now ſay, that the experience, obſervation and ſerious conſideration of ſuch things as theſe, hath occaſioned me to review my Arguments for Separation with a jealous eye; and hath prepared the way for ſuch Arguments and Conſiderations as plead the cauſe of generall communion among all Saints, to have the readier acceſſe to my underſtanding. And after ſome moneths labour in this ſearch, accompanied with ſerious ſeeking of God about this matter, I have at laſt found cauſe (as I have verily thought) to accuſe my ſelfe before the Lord, as one too greatly acceſſary to the miſchievous effects of diviſion and ſeparation; and that not only in practiſing the way of ſeparation my ſelfe, but alſo in ſtrengthening the hands of others thereto by pleading that cauſe in print. In the ſence of which, together with other my manifold weakneſſes, I have through grace humbled my ſelfe, and deſire to lie low before the Lord all my dayes. Giving him glory for his great mercy towards me in that preſence and thoſe ſupplies of his which he hath been pleaſed graciouſly to vouchſafe me, during the time of this miſtake, my weakneſſe and unworthineſſe notwithſtanding: and now at laſt to deliver me from thoſe crooked thoughts (as I humbly iudge them to have been) which cauſed me to breake communion with thoſe Chriſtian Brethren and children of my father, that were not of my minde in the points of Infant and after-baptiſme. Shall I ſay the Lord

had

had mercy on me becauſe I did it ignorantly: for I verily thought my ſelfe in a way of ſerving both God and men, in what I did therein.

I am not unſencible but that this alteration of thought and way in me; though but in the point of communion, is for the preſent, matter of offence and griefe to many, whoſe griefe upon this account cannot but be griefe to me, and whom to pleaſe in any thing, in which I ſhould not diſpleaſe the Lord, would be farre more acceptable to me. I have conſidered alſo, that ſome weak ones will be in danger of ſtumbling and taking hurt thereby; for whoſe ſakes I have been the more graduall, ſlow, and tender in diſcovering and putting in execution my change of thoughts in this particular. And it hath been no ſmall trouble to me, (the Lord knowes,) that my former unadviſedneſſe, ſhould put me upon a neceſſity of running ſuch hazards. But when I have conſidered that there is a neceſſity upon him that hath gone out of the right way, more or leſſe, to returne into it, when he comes to know it: and that a man may by no meanes make himſelfe acceſſary to a certain evil in himſelfe, to prevent a contingent and accidentall one in another: and that the probable dangers in relation to others in upholding ſeparation, are more then thoſe that attend the taking it downe; and that where one miſcarries by the latter, many fall by the former: And conſidering alſo, that I am under a publiſhed engagement in one of my Epiſtles, to retract what formerly I have done, upon condition of an after-diſcovery of vanity therein; I have thought it my duty, not only to make that late retreat; but alſo to be as publick in my returne out of the way of ſeparation, as I was in my entrance into it: as judging it not impoſſible, but that God in time may make uſe of this declaration to lead or at leaſt to keep as many and many more out of the way of ſeparation, then ever my former writings for ſeparation, led into it. However having herein done what I judged my duty, I ſhall commit the iſſue and ſucceſſe to God.

To vindicate then my preſent practice of free communion with reformed godly Congregations of Pedobaptiſts; but much

much more to perſwade others to joyne with me therein, I ſhall through Gods aſſiſtance endeavour theſe two things.

1. To take downe thoſe Arguments by which I once endeavoured to build up Separation.

2. Propoſe ſome Arguments to evince the lawfulneſſe of Church-communion between the godly, both Pedobaptiſts and Anabaptiſts, and the unlawfulneſſe of denying their communion one with another upon account of their baptiſmall difference. In the doing of which, I ſuppoſe, I ſhall have occaſion to conſider all that is conſiderable on the other hand, either of Arguments or Objections. Which done, I hope will be of good uſe to cure and prevent the evill of Separation of godly from godly upon other accounts alſo as well as this.

My ſix former Arguments for Separation, taken downe.

FIrſt, I would here give notice, that my ſix Arguments, formerly publiſhed, in countenance of Separation of godly from godly upon the account of Infant Baptiſme, are laid downe for the moſt part rather Motive-wiſe, then Argument-wiſe; and doe not rationally conclude the thing for which they were brought. I ſhall therefore contract and reduce them in the beſt of their ſtrength, into form of Argument, and then diſcover in what reſpects they are inconcludent of the poſition touching Separation, which ſhould have been proved by them.

First Argument for Separation, is to this effect.

Thoſe Churches may not be held communion with, in whoſe conſtitution ſuch a part of the foundation of chriſtian Churches as the doctrine of Baptiſme mentioned *Heb.* 6. 2. is wanting.

But ſuch are the beſt of the Churches of the Pedobaptiſts. Therefore &c.

Anſw. That it is the duty of every Chriſtian, ſo farre as he contributes any thing towards the erecting a houſe for Chriſt,

therein according to the beſt of his underſtanding, and as much as in him lies, to endeavour that it be built according to the pattern in the Mount, I mean the Scriptures; and that no part of the foundation through his default be left out; I eaſily grant and ſtill aſſert. But that that part of the foundation which conſiſts in the doctrine of Baptiſme, mentioned *Heb.* 6. 2. is wholly wanting in the Churches of the Pedobaptiſts, I doe deny: or if there be ſome part of it wanting in them; yet that ſuch a partiall defect is any ſufficient ground of ſeparation from them, I doe alſo deny, and ſhall here offer ſomething to ſhew that it is a great miſtake ſo to think.

1. That part of the foundation which conſiſts in the [*doctrine*] *of Baptiſme*, is not totally wanting in the Aſſemblies of the godly Pedobaptiſts. For about the [*doctrine*] of Baptiſme, the Pedobaptiſts doe agree with the Anabaptiſts in many weighty points, though they differ in ſome other. 1. They both agree that water Baptiſme is an ordinance inſtituted by the Lord. And 2. To be continued in the uſe of it to the end of the world. 3. That all that are converted from another to the Chriſtian religion and profeſſion, ought upon ſuch converſion, to be baptized, as thoſe whoſe Baptiſme after faith is recorded in Scripture were. 4. That to be baptized is a profeſſed putting on of Chriſt, and that Baptiſme is a badge of Chriſts profeſſed Diſciples, diſtinguiſhing them from ſuch as doe not own Chriſt. 5. That all that are baptized, are thereby obliged to ceaſe living any more to ſin, but are bound thereby to live a new and holy life unto God. 6. That all the Diſciples of Chriſt ought actually to be under this ingagement. In all theſe they both agree. 7. As the one hold themſelves actually engaged to the lawes of Chriſt by their Baptiſme after faith, ſo doe the other by that which they account a ſufficient Baptiſme, though received before faith. 8. As the one doe the things to which Goſpel-Baptiſme does oblige, ſo doe the other. Although then the Pedobaptiſts be ſuppoſed to be defective in the doctrine of Baptiſme in relation to ſome of the ſubjects of it, (and it is but ſome) and likewiſe in relation to the form of adminiſtration; yet agreeing in ſo many of the ſub-

ſubſtantiall parts of the doctrine of Baptiſme as is before mentioned; we cannot ſay juſtly, that there is an utter failer in them as to this part of the foundation. There are two parts of the doctrine of Baptiſme; the one concernes *the putting away of the filth of the fleſh*; the other *the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God, by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead.* If they are defective in that part of the doctrine which concernes the putting away the filth of the fleſh, yet they are orthodox and ſound in that part which concernes the anſwer of a good conſcience towards God; which according to the Apoſtle, is the greater and better part, 1 *Pet.* 3. 21. A partiall defect, and that too in the leſſer part of the foundation, does not make a nullity in it; no more then the want of a hand, or an eye, or a leg, makes a man to be no man. And if a woman ſhould ſeparate from her husband when wanting any of theſe, upon pretence that he is no man, ſhe would not be held innocent. Defects in and about holy things, though great and notable, doe not alwayes cauſe a privation of the ends of the holy things themſelves. The manner of *Jacobs* obtaining the bleſſing, was greatly defective, and full of ſinfull mixture, but yet did not nullifie the bleſſing it ſelfe. It was a great defect in the Office of high Prieſthood, when God would have but one high Prieſt at one time, and him during life, (*Num.* 35. 25, 28. *Heb.* 7. 23.) for men to ſet up two, or elſe to make an annuall election: (*Joh.* 11. 49, 51. & 18. 13. *Acts* 4. 6.) but yet whoever thought for all that, that all the adminiſtrations of ſuch an high Prieſt were nullities, and that no body was the better for them?

2. Its a great miſtake likewiſe, to think that every partiall defect in the foundation of a compleat Church conſtitution, is a ſufficient ground of ſeparation. For

1. Its very probable that ſomething of that which is comprized in the doctrine of Baptiſme, a part of the foundation *Heb.* 6 is wanting (as it was enjoyed in the primitive Church) in the beſt conſtituted and well ordered Church at this day in the world. For when the Author of that Epiſtle ſpeakes of the doctrine of [*Baptiſmes*] in the plurall number, what can we ſo

reasonably understand by it, besides the Baptisme of water, as the Baptisme of the Spirit? And however all that are Christs, have his Spirit, (*Rom.* 8. 9. *Gal.* 4. 6.) yet I have as I think else-where rendred it probable from *Mat.* 3. 11. *Acts* 1. 5. & 2. 3. 4. & 11. 16. compared, that the Baptisme of the Spirit, was a priviledge peculiar to the primitive times, and is not now enjoyed by any that we know of: Wherein also I know I have the concurrant judgement of many of the Baptists at least. So that its probable, all Churches this day in being, as well of the Anabaptists as of the Pedobaptists, are without this part of the foundation.

Doubt resolved, p. 37.

2. Its as probable likewise that this Church of the *Hebrews*, or at least the Hebrew Church at *Jerusalem*, which was the first Christian Church in the world, in many of the members of it, were without another part of the foundation mentioned *Heb.* 6. except the doctrine concerning it; and that is that *of laying on of hands*. By which understanding (according to the usuall and most commonly received interpretation) the imposition of hands upon baptized Disciples in order to their receiving the holy Ghost, there's good cause to conceive that many in that Church never had hands layd on them for that end. For I conceive no man will think that the Apostles, much lesse any others, did lay their hands upon any Disciples for their receiving the holy Ghost till the day of Penticost, in which they themselves received it. And the holy Ghost being then given to all the Disciples then and there in being, and that in an extraordinary measure as well as manner; (*Acts* 2.) I conceive that no man will think that the Apostles or others did afterwards lay their hands on any of those Disciples for their receiving of the holy Ghost, which they had upon such excellent termes already. And yet of these was that Church first founded, unto whom the new converts were afterwards added. So that the first Christian Church in the first constitution of it, was (in all appearance of reason) wholly without this part of the foundation which is called one of the six principles of the doctrine of Christ, and afterward so remained in that part of it of which it was first formed. The like, I suppose, may be said

of

of the first Christian Church of the Gentiles at *Cesarea*, Acts 10. who received the holy Ghost in like manner as the first Hebrew Church did, *Acts* 11. 15.

If then the want or absence of any though a lesser part of the foundation mentioned *Heb.* 6. were a sufficient ground or reason of separation from a Church in whose constitution such part is wanting, then it had been the duty of the three thousand, *Acts* 2. 41. to have kept at a distance from the hundred and twenty Disciples, in stead of being added to them, since one part of that foundation in the letter of it, was not to be found in their constitution. And if neither the want of one of the Baptismes; nor the want of laying on of hands, both which are part of the foundation mentioned *Heb.* 6. be no sufficient ground of separation; it passes my skill, I confesse, since I considered it, to evince a defect in, yea or a meer want of the externall part of the doctrine of Baptisme, to be a just ground of separation or deniall of communion, when such defect or want proceeds not from a disobedient will, but from an errour in Judgement coupled with an upright heart and soundnesse of faith in the mayne principles of the Gospel. And I would pray our Brethren that it may be considered, where the Lord hath commanded separation or deniall of communion any more for the want of the one, then for the want of the other; and that we make no such hast to withdraw from our brethren, unlesse God had bid us to doe so.

It will be sufficient for us to follow the Lord, and to withdraw when he withdraws: but it does not become us to goe before him, and to withdraw where he abides. Where Christ the only foundation is sincerely held in the mayne doctrines of Justification and Sanctification, there the Lord dwells in the grace of his presence, (*Joh.* 6. 56. 1 *Joh.* 4. 12, 16.) though otherwise there may be some spots of deformity and blemishes in respect of the externall form of his house, as well as in the conversation otherwise. And if God can dwell there and yet not approve of such defects by his presence with them, so may his servants too. The Lord vouchsafes his presence in such Churches, in order to their help and healing, and so should his

servants.

ſervants. An honeſt man will not refuſe his wifes ſociety, becauſe of ſome bodily or morall infirmities, as long as ſhe is loyall to him in the mayne, but by his continuance with her, endeavour her help and cure.

Its true; it would be more acceptable and pleaſant to well-growne Saints, to be yoked in their communion, only with ſuch as are full of ſpirituall health and beauty. As it cannot but be thought that it would be a thing more delightfull to Chriſt Jeſus, to converſe onely with creatures of an Angelicall perfection, if he had not healing-work to doe. But if Chriſt ſhould pleaſe himſelfe in the one; what would become of us? and if the beſt of Saints ſhould pleaſe themſelves in the other; what would become of the ſpiritually weak and ſickly? But behold thus it is written, and this is our pattern: *Wee then that are ſtrong, ought to beare the infirmities of the weake, and not to pleaſe our ſelves;* —— *for even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelfe*, &c. (*Rom:* 15. 1, 3.) You may know what's moſt acceptable and unacceptable to the Lord hereabout, by his complaint, *Ezek.* 34. 4. *The diſeaſed have ye not ſtrengthened; neither have ye healed that which was ſick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have brought againe that which was driven away, neither have ſought that which was loſt.* Separating from them is not the way to cure them. If they have but a ſpirituall being; that which will but denominate them new creatures: well may their miſtakes and infirmities put them under the greater neceſſity of your help, and you under the greater obligation of abounding ſo much the more in your tender, compaſſionate, and diligent applications for their increaſe in ſpirituall light, health, and ſtrength, but are farre from priviledging you to withdraw your communion from them. *For God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked; that there ſhould be no ſchiſme in the body*, 1 Cor: 12. 24, 25.

Second Argument for Separation, thus:

If the primitive believers aſſociated themſelves in Church-com-

communion with none but such as were baptized after profession of faith, then we may not. But the primitive believers did associate themselves in Church-communion with none but such as were baptized after profession of faith. *Ergo.*

Answ. I doe acknowledge that all such unbaptized persons then in being as the primitive believers would not have or had not communion with, we may not now have communion with their like; and that what was a reason unto them not to have communion with such, ought to be a reason to us of our non-communion in like case. And yet I utterly deny the consequence of the Major proposition; It will not follow that because the primitive believers had communion with none but such as were baptized after faith, therefore we may have communion with none but such as are baptized after profession of faith. And the reason of the inconsequence is taken from the difference of persons then and now. There is a great difference in the qualification of the persons that had no Baptisme, and so no Church-communion then, and many of the persons that have no Baptisme after profession of faith now, and so the reason of non-communion varies accordingly. Those in the primitive times that had no Baptisme, and so no Church-communion, had no faith, nor made confession of any. So that the reason of the primitive Saints non-communion with such, was not simply their want of Baptisme, but their want of faith. And the same non-qualification now would be a like reason unto us of non-communion. But where persons have faith, and this faith visible in their profession and conversation, and have also the doctrine of Baptisme in the spirituall part of it, both in judgement and practice, and are confident they practically have it too in the litterall part, which is the case of the godly Pedobaptists, there the difference is exceeding broad and large between them and those unbaptized persons with whom the primitive Saints had no communion; and so the same reason of non-communion will not suite both. If the primitive Saints had no communion with such as the godly Pedobaptists; it was not because they judged such unworthy their communion, but because there was none such then in being; that particular difference

rence between Saints and Saints about Infant Baptisme, not being then on foot; but if there had, I shall offer reason presently to induce us to believe that communion with them would not have been refused by the best of Saints then in being, on that ground.

In the meane time let it be considered, that we have no example of the primitive Saints refusing communion with such as the godly Pedobaptists are, and therefore by their example cannot be obliged to refuse communion with them: their example of non-communion with unbaptized unbelievers, is forraigne and irrelative to our case and question, and therefore it is altogether impertinent in its allegation.

But if there were or had been any such in the primitive times, as the godly Pedobaptists are, yet that we may be confident that the best of Saints in those times would not have refused communion with them, I shall offer these reasons.

1. We have no approved example of their refusing communion with any acknowledged godly Christians whatsoever, for any errour in Judgment, or errour in practice proceeding meerly from an errour in Judgment: and therefore this supposed errour of the godly Pedobaptists being but of that nature, we have no reason to think that they would have found harder measure if they had then lived amongst them, then all others erring upon like termes, did. And here let it be observed, that our separation of godly from godly upon account of such errours as are not repugnant to godlinesse, is so farre from being an imitation of the example of the primitive Saints, as that we have the example of the primitive Saints point blanck against it: which may be a good argument to condemne, but by no meanes to justifie our separation. *Note.*

2. When there was any thing stirring among the primitive Saints that did but tend to or looke towards a separation upon account of such errours as were not repugnant to godlinesse, it did not passe without check and discountenance from the Apostles, as is visible in the cases of difference about Circumcision, dayes, and meats, (of which more afterwards) And therefore the supposed errour of the Pedobaptists being but of the

the ſame nature; that is conſiſtent with godlineſſe as well as theirs, there's no reaſon to think it would have caſt them out of communion then when the looke of ſuch a thing in other like caſes, was ſo diſtaſtfull to the holy Apoſtle.

3. When the Apoſtle comes to lay downe and ennumerate the cauſes and things for which communion with a profeſſor of Chriſtianity is to be refuſed, there is none of them of a lower nature or leſſe demerit, then ſuch as doe exclude a man the kingdome of God, as is evident by comparing 1 *Cor:* 5. 11. with *Chap.* 6. 9, 10. as by the meer reciting of the words will appeare. 1 *Cor:* 5. 11. *But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with ſuch an one, no not to eat.* That every one of theſe crimes debarre a man the kingdome of God is evident by 1 *Cor:* 6. 9, 10. *Know ye not that the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdome of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, —nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, ſhall inherit the kingdome of God.* And where ever withdrawing from, avoiding or rejecting of a profeſſor of the Goſpel, is enjoyned the Chriſtian brethren, you will ſtill finde it is either for crimes of a morall nature, either in kinde or end, or hereſie; but never for miſpriſion of Judgment about Ordinances, and matters of doubtfull diſputation among the Saints. Peruſe for this 2 *Tim.* 3. 1.--5. 1 *Tim.* 6. 5. *Rom:* 16. 17, 18. 2 *Theſſ:* 3. 6. 11. *Tit.* 3. 10, 11. By ought then that can be gathered from the Apoſtles writings, an errour of that nature which is charged upon the Pedobaptiſts, would not have deprived godly perſons of the communion of Saints in the Apoſtles dayes. Which is a thing ſeriouſly to be laid to heart by them that are acceſſary to the keeping up a ſeparation, contrary to the doctrine, cuſtome and example of the primitive times.

Third Argument for Separation, runs thus.

None are in a regular capacity of holding Church commu-

nion with a particular Church, who are not regularly visible members of the universall Church.

But none but such as are baptized after faith, which the Pedobaptists are not, are regularly visible members of the universall Church. Therefore &c.

Answ. That none are in a regular capacity of communion in a particular Church, who are not visibly members of the universall Church, I readily grant. And as to that clause which speakes of mens being regularly visible members of the universall Church, I say thus much: That none can be visibly members of the universall Church, but so farre as they are so, they are regularly so: for no irregularity whatsoever as such, can contribute towards the visibility of a mans Church-membership, but obscure it. It is very true, that there may be more of regularnesse in the visibility of somes universall Church-membership, then in others; and so proportionably more of visiblenesse; but where ever there is this visiblenesse in a greater or lesser degree, there is so much regularnesse of that visibility.

Having said thus much by way of concession to the major proposition, and that much for the explication of an impertinent expression touching the regular visibility of universall Church-membership, I come now to deny the Minor proposition which does affirm, that none but such as are baptized after faith, are regularly visible members of the universall Church: and doe affirm, that the godly Pedobaptists are visibly members of the universall Church, though not baptized after profession of faith: and being so, have right to particular Church-membership.

Whatever it is that gives us ground to judge any of the Pedobaptists godly, or men fearing God, makes their universall Church-membership visible. For there are no godly men or holy men, who are not members of Christs body; and consequently for the same reason for which we judge any godly, we must judge them of the body or Church of Christ, if we doe but know and understand what we judge. But touching the visibility of the universall Church-membership of the godly

ly Pedobaptists, and of their right to communion in particular Churches thereby, I shall have occasion to speake more particularly and fully in my first Argument for generall communion among Saints, and therefore shall say no more of it here, but referre you thither.

Fourth Argument for Separation, stands thus:

If according to Gospel order, all Christs Disciples ought first to be baptized before they be admitted unto Church-communion, then the godly Pedobaptists, although the Disciples of Christ, not being baptized, cannot be admitted to such communion, without breach of Gospel order.

But according to Gospel order, all Christs Disciples ought first to be baptized before they be admitted unto Church-communion. Therefore &c.

Answ. I freely grant with all my heart that it is the order of Christ Jesus in the Gospel that his Disciples should first be baptized before they desire or claime communion in a particular Church: For baptizing is that which next followes discipling according both to the Commission of Christ, *Mat.* 28. 19. and the constant recorded practice of the primitive times. And so farre the Argument holds good, that if any godly Pedobaptist or other Disciple of Christ, should desire Church-communion before he is baptized as Christ would have him baptized, having opportunity of being so, he should therein make himselfe a transgressor of that order. And yet for all that it will not follow but that the godly Pedobaptists may be admitted to Church-communion by the Anabaptists, without any breach of Gospel order on their part that doe so admit them.

And therefore I distinguish upon that phrase [*without breach of Gospel order*] mentioned in the close of the consequence of the Major proposition, as it relates to the admission of the godly Pedobaptists to communion. 1. As it respects the persons themselves to be admitted, the propoition is true; upon supposition that the godly Pedobaptists should prove not to

be baptized, then it would be a breach of the Goſpel order aforeſaid on their part, to claime Church-communion before they are baptized. But 2. If that paſſage [*cannot be admitted to ſuch communion without breach of Goſpel order*] be underſtood as reſpecting the Anabaptiſts as perſons admitting; then I conceive the conſequence of the Major propoſition is falſe, and that it will be no breach of Goſpel order on their part to admit ſuch to their communion, but indeed a conforming to and a faithfull obſerving of Goſpel order, viſible in other parts of the New Teſtament to doe. For

There is no Goſpel order that I know of, that enjoynes baptized believers in no caſe to admit believers that are not baptized, into their communion: and *where there is no law there is no tranſgreſſion*, Rom: 4. 15. And if Chriſt have made no ſuch law, I am ſure it will not become us to make any ſuch. When I formerly built up that way of Separation which now I am labouring to take downe, my ſoule made diligent ſearch for ſome Scripture forbidding the baptized to hold communion with unbaptized believers. And among all which I thought looked that way, *Mat.* 28. 19. is the chiefe, *Goe teach* or diſciple *all nations, baptizing them*. Which being againe looked into, I finde that all that can be gathered from it hereabout is onely this; that Chriſt would have all thoſe to be baptized, that ſhould be made Diſciples; or at moſt to be baptized next after diſcipling. Theſe words containe onely a law about diſcipling and baptizing, but nothing at all about communion: they enjoyne what ſhall be done in the one, but forbid nothing to be done in the other. As for the Diſciples after behaviour, it is concerned in the next words following, *ver.* 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you, viz.* to teach them. If then it did appeare that the Lord commanded his Apoſtles to teach the Diſciples when once baptized, nor to admit any unbaptized Diſciples of his to their communion in no caſe, then indeed it would be unlawfull for them ſo to doe. But till that do appeare, we had need to take heed of making voyd another command of the Lord, that we might eſtabliſh our own tradition inſtead of his command, in this.

Obj.

Obj. But is not the constant order which the primitive Saints observed, a Gospel order? and was it not their constant order without so much as once varying it, to receive onely such into Church-fellowship and communion, as were before baptized? *Acts* 2. 41. 1 *Cor.* 12. 13. And would it not then be a violation of such Gospel order to doe otherwise now?

Answ. I doe not know but that it was their constant order as to matter of fact to receive only baptized Disciples into Church-communion: nor do I think but that under the circumstances of their case, what they did in that kinde, was a Gospel order; and that under the same circumstances to doe otherwise now, would be a violation of Gospel order. And yet for all that, this their primitive order of non-admission of unbaptized, does not binde up the Anabaptists to a non-admission of the godly Pedobaptists to their communion, where the same reason of non-admission is not in being.

For it is not the meer fact and literall practice of the primitive Saints simply considered, that is now binding to us; but the reason of it. Men that are not under the same reason of counting nothing which they possesse their owne, are not under the same obligation of selling their possessions and parting with them, as the primitive Saints were, *Acts* 4. Nay which is more, this is not only true in respect of practice and example, but of some precepts also: there were some precepts which were binding to them then, which are not so among us now, and that upon this very ground, because the reason of them is not in being to us as it was to them. As for example, *Mat.* 6. 17, 18. *But thou when thou fastest, annoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appeare not unto men to fast.* This though the expresse command of Christ to his Disciples, yet is not binding to us in the letter of it, because the custome of the places where those Disciples lived and we now live, do vary so much, as that the reason of the precept would be crossed should the letter of it be observed. And surely it is for like reason that we doe not hold the holy kiss, (1 *Thes.* 5. 26.) and the washing of Saints feet, (*John* 13.) and some other things of like nature, though expresly enjoyned, to be so obliging to us as to the

the primitive Saints. And upon what other ground elſe could the 120 Diſciples (*Acts* 1.) be any more excuſed from having hands laid on them, (ſuppoſing it in it ſelfe a duty in thoſe times as part of the foundation *Heb:* 6. 2.) then other primitive Saints, but onely that the end and reaſon of it was not in being to them, as it was to others. Upon like ground therefore I think we may ſafely conclude, that if the primitive Saints reaſon of not admitting unbaptized perſons to their communion, be not our reaſon, or is not in being to us in relation to the godly Pedobaptiſts, then their practice cannot be our binding preſident, nor our literall variation, a morall violation of their order.

See we then whether the reaſon of the primitive Saints admitting onely baptized Diſciples to their communion, be a reaſon to us to exclude the godly Pedobaptiſts, or rather whether it be not a binding reaſon to us why they ſhould be admitted to communion.

The reaſon of admitting ſuch and ſuch onely as they did to the communion of Saints, muſt needs be their appearance to be Saints: The ſaintly qualification of the perſon, muſt needs be the adequate reaſon of his admiſſion to Saints communion. When thoſe in Church-communion were ſtill ſtiled Saints in the inſcriptions of the Epiſtles ſent them, they received that denomination from that which was the ground and reaſon of their communion. See *Rom:* 1. 7. 1 *Cor:* 1. 2. *Epheſ:* 1. 1. *Phil:* 1. 1. *Col:* 1. 1. The reaſon therefore why they admitted baptized and onely baptized to their communion in the primitive times, was becauſe they had reaſon to eſteem ſuch and onely ſuch for Saints. Any man that ſhould then have refuſed Baptiſme, (ſuppoſing no conſcientious ſcruple about it then in being among the Saints) it would have been and indeed was argument ſufficient againſt his Saintſhip or being a cordiall Diſciple of Chriſt. To deny Chriſt and to deny to be baptized in his name, was much the ſame thing then. Upon which ground the refuſing of or not deſiring of Baptiſme in whomſoever found, was ground to the Saints then to refuſe or not deſire communion with them. And as it was then, ſo it is now in like caſe:

where

where the want of a regular Baptiſme now, is as much an argument of no grace as it was in the primitive times, there it is as much an argument of non-communion with ſuch perſons now as then.

But where the want of any thing which belongs to a regular Baptiſme, is no argument of non-Saintſhip, there I think it can be no argument of non-communion with Saints. They having that upon which the communion of Saints is founded (to wit, Saintſhip) muſt needs have a right to the communion it ſelfe. If baptiſme in the primitive times was a reaſon ſubordinately of communion as it was an argument of Saintſhip, then by the rule of contraries, the want of it can be no argument againſt communion, but as ſuch a want is an argument of non-Saintſhip, Of this more afterwards.

But moſt certain it is that the want of regular baptiſme, which is laid to the Pedobaptiſts charge, is no argument of non-Saintſhip in many of them; it proceeding not from want of a ſincere love to Chriſt; of which love many of them have given an ample teſtimony otherwiſe both in doing and ſuffering for him, but meerly from want of light in the thing; they profeſſing (and I believe in good earneſt) that if they did not believe they were baptized already, it ſhould be one of the firſt things they would ſeeke opportunitie to doe, to become baptized. You ſee then upon what ground the primitive practice of holding communion with none but baptized Diſciples, is not binding to us but in like caſes.

But what ever the other was, to be ſure this was a Goſpel order among the primitive Saints, the morall reaſon whereof does as well oblige us as them; to wit, Saints holding communion with ſuch in whom there was the appearance of Saints, notwithſtanding all ignorances, errings, and miſtakes otherwiſe. And why any of our brethren ſhould have their eye ſo much upon that other piece of Goſpel order, and overlooke this, and not thinke themſelves as much and much more obliged by this then that, eſpecially conſidering that there is precept upon precept as well as preſident in this caſe, but not ſo in the other, I am ſure I (not to ſay they) can give no good reaſon. But of this more afterward.

Fifth

Fifth Argument for Separation comes out thus.

If Baptiſme bear the ſame relation to the Supper of the Lord, as Circumciſion did to the Paſſeover, then no unbaptized perſon may be admitted to the Supper of the Lord, becauſe none uncircumciſed might be admitted to the Paſſeover.

But Baptiſme does bear the ſame relation to the Supper of the Lord as Circumciſion did to the Paſſeover. Therefore.

Anſw. I ſhall not inſiſt upon the undermining the baſis of this propoſition, by aſſerting that Circumciſion was not in all caſes abſolutely previouſly neceſſary to communion in the Paſſeover: as in the caſe of women, who were communicants in that ordinance though not circumciſed: and likewiſe in the caſe of neer forty yeares intermiſſion of Circumciſion in the wilderneſſe; in which time there was one Paſſeover, to be ſure, if not many more: for I have that which will be more ſatisfactory then this.

I ſhall therefore deny the Minor propoſition: Baptiſme does not beare the ſame relation to the Lords Supper, as Circumciſion did to the Paſſeover. That relation which Circumciſion did bear to the Paſſeover, as to make the former a neceſſary qualification in a perſon for the enjoyment of the latter, was the relation of an expreſſe command of God, making the one ſo neceſſary in relation to the other, as that the Lord did expreſsly prohibit any uncircumciſed male to eat thereof, *Exod.* 12.48. But now the New Teſtament affords us no ſuch expreſſe Law prohibiting communion in the Lords Supper to ſuch as upon any account are not baptized.

I doe acknowledge indeed that the New Teſtament does implicitly enjoyne Diſciples of Chriſt to be baptized before they participate in the Lords Supper; but not ſo as to make the latter act, to wit, communion in the Supper unlawfull without the former. Though Baptiſme be enjoyned to be received in its proper place and ſeaſon, yet all other after duties of Chriſtianity are not forbidden in caſe the other ſhould unknowingly or for want of a naturall or morall opportunity be deferred

or

or omitted. If a man omits one previous duty, as not knowing it to be his duty, or as thinking he hath already done it, when he hath not, it will not follow that he is hereupon bound to omit all other after duties which he knowes and acknowledgeth to be his dutie. It is as much the duty of Pedobaptists to be baptized before the greatest part of the prayers they make, the Chapters they read, the Sermons they hear, in order to their growth in grace already received, as it is for them to be baptized before they participate in the Supper; and yet who will say that it is a sin for them to pray, to read, or to heare the word for such an end? And if it be not a sin for them to doe these duties for their growth; why should it be their sin to have communion in the Supper for the same end? since there is as much reason to lay aside the one, as to forbear the other, upon the forementioned ground. If they doe sin, their sin lies not in doing that which they know to be their duty; but in omitting that which is, but is not knowne by them so to be. And if these duties be lawfull in them to doe as Christians, can it reasonably be thought unlawfull for us to joyne with them in them? May we not joyne with them and hold communion with them in that which is lawfull (being men having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ) because we may not have communion with them, or joyne with them in that which is unlawfull? Or does our communion with them in that which is good, make us guilty of their infirmities or mistakes, especially when they know that we disallow them? If this were so, there would have been no roome for Christian communion between the weake and strong Christians in the Apostles dayes; the herb-eaters and the flesh-eaters; those that were for the observing of such a day, and those that were not: those that were for circumcising, and those that were not.

Obj. But was not Christ as faithfull in his house, as *Moses* was in his? *Heb.* 3. 2. If so; hath not he been as particular and as strict in his lawes for communion, as namely that no unbaptized person should taste of his Supper, as *Moses* was in forbidding the uncircumcised to eat of the Passeover?

Answ. Christ is and hath been as faithfull in his house, as

Moſes was in his; but how? not in deſcending to ſo many particularities about externall ordinances as *Moſes* did, but in declaring all that he had received from his father to make known, *John* 12. 49, 50. & 15. 15. As *Moſes* was faithfull to the extent of his Commiſſion, ſo was Chriſt to the utmoſt latitude of his. But then it will follow, that if Chriſt hath no where given a law in like manner, and upon like termes, forbidding all unbaptized Diſciples communion in the Supper, as *Moſes* did for the reſtraining of the uncircumciſed from the Paſſeover, that the reaſon is becauſe he had no ſuch command from his father, and conſequently that it is not the fathers will to lay the ſame reſtraint in the one caſe, as he did in the other. This I conceive, may be an anſwer fully ſatisfactory, to this fifth Argument.

I might here have ſhewed, that the New Teſtament makes the Chriſtian Circumciſion, which conſiſts in the *putting off the body of the ſins of the fleſh*, (Col: 2. 11.) to anſwer more properly to Circumciſion in the fleſh, then Baptiſme does; and conſequently that as the literall Circumciſion was the boundary of communion in the old Teſtament Church, ſo the ſpirituall Circumciſion is the boundary of communion in the New Teſtament Church: No men being to be knowne or acknowledged for Church-members now after the fleſh, as by Circumciſion they were wont to be; but now, *if any man be in Chriſt, he is a new creature:* upon that account to be looked upon as one in Chriſt, (2 *Cor:* 5. 16, 17.) As the want then of a regular Baptiſme is an argument that the new creatureſhip is wanting, ſo farre I ſhall grant the want of it an argument againſt communion with thoſe that want it, but no further as I ſee.

Rom. 2. 29. Phil. 3. 3.

Sixth Argument for Separation, is to this effect.

If the practice of holding communion with ſuch onely as are baptized after faith, be more ſafe and more full of Scripture light and evidence, then the practice of holding communion with Pedobaptiſts is, then ſuch a practice is rather to be choſen then the other.

But

But the practice of holding communion with such onely as are baptized after faith, is more safe, and more full of Scripture-light and evidence, then the other is: Therefore &c.

Answ. Here the Minor is again denyed: It is not more safe nor more full of Scripture-light and evidence to hold communion with such onely as are baptized after faith, when in the doing of it, communion with other godly Christians of different perswasion, is rejected. There is no Scripture-light or evidence for this, neither of precept or example, (as will be further shewed afterwards) but is a practice attended with danger and inconvenience both to themselves and others, and to the affaires of Jesus Christ now abroad in the world, as hath already been shewed, and needs not here to be repeated, and will be further touched on afterward.

And this much shall suffice for the taking downe of the old building, which yet indeed was not old, but new. I shall now proceed to the erecting of that in its place and roome, which as I judge, will be more substantiall, beautifull, and serviceable, then the other was.

Six Arguments for the lawfulnesse of Church-Communion, between the godly Pedobaptists and Anabaptists, notwithstanding their different perswasion touching infant and after Baptisme.

I. *Argument.*

ALL those that are visibly of Christs universall body, have thereby a right to communion in particular Churches: but some which are for infant Baptisme, are visibly of Christs universall body: therefore some which are for infant baptisme, have a right to communion in particular Churches.

Before I endeavour the proofe of the proposition, take a word for explication of some of the termes of it.

By the universall body of Christ, I meane all those that are actually united to him, and are thereby in an actuall and pre-

ſent capacity of being ſaved by him. Thoſe in Scripture are called *the body of Chriſt*; *his body the Church*; *the whole body*; and *the generall aſſembly and Church of the firſt-born*, Eph: 4. 12, 16. & 1. 22, 23. Col: 1. 18, 24. Heb: 12. 23. Of this number ſome are inviſible, and ſome viſible. Of thoſe that are inviſible, ſome are in the other world, and ſome in this. Thoſe in this world that are of Chriſts body, and yet not viſibly ſo, are ſuch as are united to Chriſt by internall grace, and have not yet had opportunity to manifeſt it by a ſuitable profeſſion and converſation. Thoſe are viſibly of this body, whoſe profeſſion and converſation is declarative of this ſpirituall union. And of this number are many of thoſe that are for infant baptiſme. Thus much for explication; now to our proofe of the propoſition.

It is affirmed in the Major propoſition, that all thoſe that are viſibly of Chriſts univerſall body, have thereby a right to communion in particular Churches.

1. The truth of this is obvious to common ſenſe; for what can be imagined to be ſo eſſentiall to communion, as union? In all bodyes whether naturall, myſticall, or politicall, communion of parts flowes from union with the whole. Chriſt being the common head of Chriſtians, and center of union, hence it is that all that are united to him, are united one to another; or (according to the Apoſtles phraſe) *are members one of another*, *Rom:* 12. 5. And being ſo, communion in giving and receiving mutuall help, is the naturall effect and common right of ſuch union. It would be monſterous in nature (and can it be otherwiſe in grace) for one member of the ſame body to deny the communication of comfort to the other: *No man* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *ever hated his owne fleſh, but nouriſheth and cheriſheth it, as the Lord doth the Church*, Eph. 5. 29. And does the Lord nouriſh and cheriſh ſuch becauſe they are his members? and ſhall it be denied amongſt thoſe that are members one of another? God forbid!

2. Communion is the end of union, or that for the ſake of which union is made. Chriſt tooke our nature into union with himſelfe, that by communication he might become Wiſdome, Righ-

Righteouſneſſe, Sanctification, and Redemption to us. And he hath *knit together* the ſeverall parts, that the whole body might increaſe and be edified *by that which every joynt ſupplieth by the effectuall working of the meaſure of every part*, Eph: 4. 16. Col: 2.19. And therefore to deny communion to thoſe among whom there is union, is to croſſe and fruſtrate the very end of union.

3ly. That which is given and belongs to the whole body, is given and belongs to every part. But *the work of miniſtration* (as the word is rendred) to wit, of the ordinances of Chriſt, is ordained for the *edification of the whole body*, Eph: 4. 12. and conſequently for every part. All that in common is given to the Church, (as the ordinances as well as other things are,) is given to every one that is Chriſts, as all thoſe are who are united to him, 1 *Cor:* 3. 21, 22, 23. And the paſture that is provided for the ſheep of Chriſts flock, belongs to every one that by Chriſt enters into his owne ſheepfold, *John* 10. 9. To conclude then; what better, ſtronger, or more rightfull claime, can any have to communion in a particular Church, then his memberſhip in the univerſall?

Obj. 1. Againſt this it may be ſome will object, that union with the Church does not give ſuch a right to communion in it, but that ſome unworthy and unchriſtian behaviour may be a juſt barr to ones communion with the Church, at ſuch time as his union with it, is not denyed. The Apoſtle commands to withdraw from every brother that walks diſorderly, not working at all, but walking as a buſie-body; and yet during the time of this withdrawing, he would have ſuch an one to be admoniſhed as a brother, and not counted as an enemy: and what is this leſſe then to acknowledge him as yet a brother in the univerſall Church, and yet to deny him communion in their particular ſociety? 2 *Theſ:* 3. 6—15.

Anſw. When ſuch ſcandalls in life or doctrine are found in a perſon that hath been owned for one of Chriſts Church, as does ſo farre contradict that chriſtian profeſſion by which he was firſt received into communion with the Church, as to give juſt ground of ſuſpition that there was never that internall union

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on with Christ and his Church, which such profession did seem to import, or if there were, that it hath been since dissolved by such an offensive walking, as is justly suspected to be inconsistent with true grace: I say while things are in such a doubtfull & suspitious posture, and in a way of ripening for a finall judgment of the Church about his cutting off; such a carriage of the Church towards such a Delinquent, seemes most suitable, as by which he shall be declared neither clearly on, nor clearly off the Church, but hanging in suspence; as namely by suspending him communion as one going off the Church if not recovered, and yet to be admonished as a brother not yet totally cast off. And this seemes clearly to be the case of those whom the Apostolicall rule in 2 *Thes:* 3. 6—15 concernes. But then this will not be found of force against the admission of such godly Pedobaptists to Church-communion, who hold their supposed errour upon such termes, as does not at all render their spirituall and internall union with Christ, & so with his Church, justly suspected in the account of sober, impartiall, and judicious Christians.

1. The disorderly walking in 2 *Thes:* 3. contrary to the tradition of the Apostles, which was to be proceeded against by with-drawing from such as were guilty of it, was not every disorder that was contrary to Apostolical tradition or institution, as is most evident. For the Apostles clearly taught such meats might lawfully be eaten, which some scrupled, 1 *Tim:* 4. 3, 4, 5. and likewise some dayes to be common, which some Christians did count sacred, *Col:* 2. 16, 17. *Gal:* 4. 10, 11. and Circumcision to be unnecessary, which some Christians thought necessary, 1 *Cor:* 7. 19. *Gal:* 5. 6. and yet for all that, allowed, yea required the admission of such godly Christians to communion, who meerly through weakneſſe and want of conviction, were found in these things disorderly and non-obedient to those Apostolicall traditions or institutions, *Rom:* 14. 1.—6. & 15. 1, 7. *Acts* 21.

2. The disorderly walking in 2 *Thes:* 3. to be proceeded against by withdrawing from such as were guilty of it, was of a morall nature, and of publick scandall to those without as well

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as those within the Church, and not matter of doubtfull disputation among good Christians, as the other things were. For such was, not working, and playing the busie-bodyes, (1 *Thes:* 4. 11, 12. 1 *Tim:* 5. 13, 14. 1 *Pet:* 4. 15.) which yet was the disorder precisely for which the Apostle enjoynes withdrawing from in 2 *Thes:* 3. Yea it was an evill of that nature, and so contradictious to the Christian profession, that according to the same Apostles own account, whosoever made himselfe guilty of it, denyed the faith, and rendred himselfe worse then an Infidell, 1 *Tim:* 5. 8. And therefore no marvell if not meet to be continued in communion, when the profession and conversation, the only visible witnesse of internall union, is rendred invalid by so mighty a contradiction.

But what's this to the godly Pedobaptists case? whose supposed errour is not of a morall nature, nor of publick scandall to those without, nor such as does invalidate the testimony of their profession and conversation, as witnessing their internall union with Christ and his Church; nor so much as rendering it doubtfull, nor justly to be suspected; but a matter of doubtfull disputation among many of those that are truely godly, and not of least discerning in spirituall affaires.

Obj. 2. It may be yet further objected; that though its true that membership with Christ, and in the Church universall, gives a remote right to communion in particular Churches, yet none can have an immediate right without Baptisme after faith, that being the door of enterance into the Church.

To this I answer; 1. That though its true that Baptisme is necessary by way of duty to give a man an orderly and compleat right to particular Church-fellowship, when he hath an opportunity of being baptized, yet it will not therefore follow that its absolutely necessary by way of means or under penalty, without which such fellowship and communion is not to be had, when the reason of the want of such Baptisme, is the want of opportunity to enjoy it. The truth whereof appears by this undeniable reason: Baptisme is no more necessary to Church-communion, then it is to salvation. For how can the means be more necessary to the subordinate, then it is to the principall end?

end? If Baptisme be necessary to Church-communion, it is because Church-communion is respectively necessary to salvation; for neither of them would be necessary, if no such thing were as salvation is, to which they both relate. But now Baptisme is necessary to salvation but by way of duty when opportunity occurs, but is not necessary by way of means, so as without which salvation is not to be had, when opportunity of doing ones duty in this kinde is wanting. This is our constant protestant doctrine, against the too much rigidity of Popish necessity. And therefore if Baptisme be necessary to salvation but upon such termes, then surely it cannot be necessary to Church-communion upon higher or more strict termes; if any thing may be remitted in the strictnesse of the termes of necessity, it would rather be as it relates to its lesse principall then principall end.

But now that the true reason why the godly Pedobaptists are not baptized after faith, is the want of a morall opportunity, is a thing not to be doubted. For all the while they remaine unconvinced that it is their duty, or so much as lawfull for them to be so baptized, so long they are clearly under the want of a morall opportunity of receiving such a Baptisme. For they can no more lawfully be so baptized during the time of such dissatisfaction, then others can who are satisfied, whilst they want the opportunity of health, water, or a meet administrator.

It was as much the *Israelites* duty to be circumcised before their admission to communion in any part of congregationall worship, (the time prescribed for Circumcision considered) as it is the duty of believers to be baptized before admission to Church communion, (yea the Law was more expresse in that poynt then the Gospel is in this,) and yet for want of opportunity of performing the one, the other was enjoyed without it for a certaine season in the wildernesse. The want then of a morall opportunity of doing that which in order of nature should goe before, is not a barr against the doing of all that which according to common order should follow after; for then it would as well be unlawfull for the godly Pedobaptists

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to proceed in a long continued course of hearing, praying, &c. for their edification in the grace they have received, as it would be for them to breake bread in remembrance of the Lords death; because their baptisme after faith, ought as well to precede the one as the other. But surely it is not in the heart of any tender Christian, to suspend them the exercise of these, untill they are satisfied touching the other. And I query, by what law or rule they come under suspension any more in the one, then in the other? Their supposed sin, then, lies not in this; that they breake bread and performe other Christian duties before they are baptized; but in this, that they omit Baptisme after the proper season of it. And it does not follow that communion may not be held with them in that which is lawfull, yea their duty, because it may not be held with them in that which is their supposed weakneſse in omitting a duty: a consent in the one, and a declared disapprobation of the other, may well consist.

2. To the objection which supposeth internall union with the Church, to give only a remote right to Church-communion, but Baptisme the immediate right, I further answer thus; Baptisme does not of it selfe constitute a right to Church-communion, but is declarative of that which does: it is the union by grace which constitutes a mans right when made visible, and not Baptisme otherwise then as it is declarative of this. That this is so, appeares thus: When such a heresie or scandalous life does occurre a man that hath been baptized, as does totally obscure the grace of union, or declare the non-being of it; his Baptisme cannot protect him from being cut off communion with the Church, as it would doe, if of it selfe it did constitute a mans right. And is there not the same reason why the involuntary want of regular Baptisme should not deprive a man of communion, if the grace of union which does constitute his right to it be apparently visible otherwise? If baptisme cannot give a man right in the absence of visible grace; why should the involuntary want of it deprive him of it in the presence of visible grace?

It is true, Baptisme is reputed the doore of enterance into

the Church: and the Scripture ſaith, that *by one Spirit, we are all baptized into o e body*, 1 Cor: 12. 13. But how? Surely not by originall conſtitution, but by way of ſigne and ſolemnization. Which agrees to the nature and uſuall deſcription of Sacraments, as they are called, as conſiſting of outward ſigne, and inward grace: the letter of the ordinance as to this uſe of it, being but the ſigne of the ſpirituall union and communion which by it is profeſſedly declared to be between him that is baptized, and the reſt of Chriſts body. So that mens actuall, reall, and ſpirituall union and membership with Chriſt, and ſo with the Church (which is the ground of communion) is ſuppoſed and ought to precede the ſolemnization of it by way of ſigne. The ſigne, to wit, Baptiſme with water, delivers the baptized into the viſible union and communion of the Church, by pointing to and declaring their inward and ſpirituall union and communion with it, as that which gives them right to outward and viſible communion. If then the grace of ſpirituall union which fundamentally gives a man right to Church-communion, may be evidenced and declared by other means without regular Baptiſme, (though its every Chriſtians duty to have his baptiſme concurre in ſuch declaration, when he hath opportunity ſo to doe,) it will not follow then, that the want of ſuch baptiſme betiding a man through unavoydable neceſſity in the want of opportunity, will deprive him of an immediate right to ſuch communion. But that the grace of ſpirituall union which many that are for infant baptiſme, have with Chriſt the head, and his body the Church, is clearly evidenced, though they not baptized after faith, is that which in the next place I am to undertake the proofe of.

My Minor propoſition then, was this: But ſome which are for infant baptiſme, are viſibly of Chriſts univerſall body: which I prove thus.

1. If thoſe eſſentiall and conſtitutive properties and marks, by which the viſible members of the primitive Churches which were of Chriſts univerſall body, were deſcribed and diſtinguiſhed from thoſe that were not, are viſibly in ſome that are for infant baptiſme, then ſome that are for infant baptiſme, are

are visibly of Christs universall body.

But those essentiall and constitutive properties and markes by which the visible members of the primitive Churches that were of Christs universall body, were described and distinguished, are visible in some that are for infant baptisme. Therefore, &c.

I suppose the consequence of the Major proposition, will not be denyed, *viz.* that if the same things which essentially made the sound members of the primitive Churches to be visibly of the universall body of Christ, be found in Pedobaptists, that then there is all reason to conclude them to be of the same body, what ever defects otherwise may be found in them. For those properties and formall differences which are argumentative and declarative of the kinde, doe argue and declare all to be of that kinde, in whom those properties and formall differences are found. If a humane body and reasonable soule be essentiall to mankinde, and that by which that kinde of creature doth formally differ from all other; then it must needs follow that all that have a humane body and reasonable soule, (what ever other defects in nature they have,) are of mankinde.

For the examination of the truth of the Minor; we will consider what those essentiall and constitutive properties and marks were, by which those of the primitive Churches were discerned to be of Christs universall body, and distinguished from those that were not: and then consider whether the same things, properties and marks, be not visible in many that are for infant baptisme. Those that were of Christs body in *Rome*, you have distinguished from the rest in *Rome* that were not, by this propertie; *called to be Saints*, Rom: 1. 7. Those in *Corinth* in like manner by these; *Sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be Saints*: and others of the same body else-where, described by this, that they are such *as call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours*; to wit, believingly, and sincerely, 1 *Cor:* 1. 2. Those of the Church of Christ at *Ephesus*, thus: *The Saints which are at Ephesus, the faithfull in Christ Jesus*, Eph: 1, 1. Those at *Philippi*, thus; *All the Saints*

in Christ Jesus, Phil: 1. 1. Those at *Colosse*, thus: *The Saints and faithfull brethren in Christ*, Col: 1. 2.

Now that there are many of those that are for infant baptisme, concerning whom it is meet for us and for all Saints to think, that they are *called to be Saints*; *sanctified in Christ Jesus*; are *faithfull in Christ Jesus*; are faithfull brethren in Christ; and such as call (and that in faith) upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours, I hope no sober Christian will deny: and to thinke otherwise would argue little skill in Christianity, and an extraordinary deep poverty in charity.

2. I further prove that some that are for infant baptisme, are of the universall body of Christ, thus. All that doe truely believe in Jesus Christ, are members of that universall body whereof he is the head: but some for infant baptisme doe so believe, *Ergo*, &c. The Minor needs no proof. The Major, *viz.* that so many of those that are for infant baptisme as doe unfeignedly believe in Jesus Christ, are members of his body; or which is the same, are of his Church, I prove from *Heb:* 3. 6. *But Christ as a Son over his owne house: whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoycing of the hope firme unto the end.* Againe, *ver:* 14. *For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.* It was their faith and confidence in Christ (we see) that made them partakers of Christ, and to be of his house which is the Church, (1 *Tim:* 3. 15.) and upon their perseverance in this confidence, did depend their perseverance in this priviledge. And the same faith which did make them partakers of Christ, and to be of his house, when found in those that are for infant baptisme, will produce the same effect, and procure them the same priviledge. The Saints are called the *household of faith*, (Gal: 6. 10.) as receiving that denomination from their faith which makes them of Gods house. *They are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*, that have faith, *Gal.* 3. 26. and such as are Sons, *abide in Gods house for ever*, as members of his family, *Joh.* 8. 35. For God hath no children that are not of his household.

3. If

3. If ſome that are for infant baptiſme are *reconciled to God* by Chriſts death on the croſſe, upon their believing, and ſo through Chriſt, and *by the Spirit, have an acceſſe unto the father*, then ſuch *are no more ſtrangers and forrainers, but fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God*, Ephel: 2. 16—19.

But ſome that are for infant baptiſme, are ſo reconciled, and have ſuch an acceſſe to the father: This is not without the conceſſion of the Antipedobaptiſts, and therefore needs no farther proofe. Therefore we may well conclude, that ſome that are for infant baptiſme, are no more ſtrangers and forreiners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the houſhold of God.

Object. Againſt the pertinency of the forecited proofes to conclude Pedobaptiſts to be viſibly of the body of Chriſt, it may perhaps be objected; that all thoſe Chriſtians of the ſeverall Churches, of which the forecited Scriptures make mention, were all baptized after the profeſſion of faith; and that it will not follow, that becauſe faith, ſanctification, and the reſt of thoſe qualifications, did denominate ſuch as were baptized after faith, to be of the Church, that therefore they muſt denominate ſuch as are not baptized after faith, to be of the Church likewiſe. For as they had one faith, ſo they had one baptiſme (*Eph:* 4. 5.) and this did beare its ſhare in their Chriſtian denomination and diſtinction, as well as any other qualification.

To this I anſwer. That it was the faith, calling, and ſanctification as ſuch, and the viſibility of theſe, by which thoſe Chriſtians were deſcribed and denominated to be of the Church, and diſtinguiſhed from thoſe that were not; and therefore thoſe that are under the ſame qualifications eſſentially (as ſome Pedobaptiſts are,) though perhaps not circumſtantially, muſt needs come under the ſame denomination of membership in the Church of Chriſt If the Apoſtle *Paul* were now alive, and ſhould write an Epiſtle to the Church of God in *London*, inſcribing and directing it to all in *London* that are called to be Saints; or ſanctified in Chriſt Jeſus; or the faithfull in Chriſt; would it not be reaſonable to think that all ſuch

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Pedobaptists there, as are called to be Saints, and sanctified in Christ Jesus; were hereby meant as well as those that are such among those that have been baptized after profession of faith?

1. The most that I think can rationally be said, is, that the Baptisme of those Christians in the primitive Churches, did beare its share, and was one ingredient in denominating them persons called to be Saints, sanctified in Christ Jesus, *&c.* but not that it did wholly or mainly constitute it. Not but that the faith, calling, and sanctification of many Pedobaptists is the same in the maine, with those primitive Saints, (they are *partakers of like precious faith*, 2 Pet: 1. 1.) only it hath not, it may be, all the same ingredients in it to make it altogether so compleat and rich as theirs was. So that if this defect, and the want of this ingredient of regular baptisme, do not nullifie the visibility of the faith, calling, and sanctification of the Pedobaptists, then they may truely be said to have the same faith, calling, and sanctification in kinde, if not in degree, which the primitive Saints had. Baptisme doth not constitute another kinde of faith and Sainctship then the same persons had before they were baptized; all that can be supposed, is, that it tends towards the compleating of these in degrees of being and visibility.

2. And yet I doubt not but that taking one thing with another, comparison may be made between the visibility of Saintship as it was in some at least of those primitive Saints, and as it now is in many that are for infant baptisme, and that in point of degree. If the visibility of Saintship in Pedobaptists, be defective for want of regular baptisme; may we not well conceive that the visibility of the sanctification of some primitive Church-members that were owned as brethren in Christ, was defective much more on another score? Weigh & consider the erronious opinions, superstitious customs, uncharitable contentions & censurings, and other too much sensuall deportment, that was yet remaining and found among those that were owned for brethren, visible Saints, and members of the primitive Church; and then let conscience judge, whether in the whole; advantages

tages and disadvantages compared in both, the Christian visibility and sanctification of very many Pedobaptists, doe not shine much brighter, and give a far more distinct and indubitable testimony of their spirituall and internall membership with Christ and his Church, then many of the others did. See 1 *Cor:* 8. 7. with 10. 11. *Acts* 15. 5. *Rom:* 14. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 1 *Cor:* 1. 11. & 3. 1, 3. & 11. 18, 21.

Argument II.

ALL those whom the Lord now in times of the New Testament hath received into communion with himselfe, those his children ought to receive to communion with them.

But some that are for infant Baptisme are such whom the Lord hath received into communion with himselfe. Therefore.

That the Lords receiving persons to communion with him, is now under the New Testament a sufficient reason why his children should receive the same to communion with them, I conceive is sufficiently evident by these Scriptures. *Rom:* 15. 7. *Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.* And againe, *Rom:* 14. 1, 3. *Him that is weake in the faith receive you. Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not: and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth:* [*for God hath received him.*] The case was this: Some of the believing Jewes and Gentiles stood at too great a distance by reason of their different perswasion touching severall things. That by which the Apostle would convince them of their errour herein, and so bring them to close communion, is by laying before them the dissimilitude that was between the Lords carriage and theirs towards the same persons, and the conformity and agreement that ought to be. That they did not receive those whom the Lord had received, was their fault, but to receive such as he had received, was their dutie. The Apostles Argument is built upon this supposition: that the Lord is a pattern unto his people in receiving persons to communion: and if cast into forme, would be this. Those whom the Lord receives to communion, his people ought to receive

receive to communion too: but the Lord receives both Jewes and Gentiles, weake and ſtrong Chriſtians, notwithſtanding their different perſwaſions, therefore you his people ought to doe ſo too. See the connexion of *Rom:* 15, 7, 8, 9.

Object. Theſe differing Saints who are thus enjoyned by the Apoſtle to receive one another, notwithſtanding their difference, were all baptized perſons, and therefore that by which they were obliged to receive one another, can be no rule for ſuch as are baptized, to receive ſuch as are unbaptized, to communion.

Anſw. Suppoſe they were all baptized; yet their receiving one another is not urged from their baptiſme, but from the Lords receiving them. Their baptiſme here, was no further an argument why they ſhould receive one another, then as it was an argument that the Lord had received them. And by the ſame reaſon, on the contrary, no errour about Baptiſme can be a reaſon why ſuch erronious perſons ſhould not be received, further then it is an argument that the Lord hath not received them: The Lords receiving or not receiving perſons, muſt regulate his people in their receiving and refuſing to receive them.

Object. Theſe differing Saints were all in communion of the Church already; and therefore their receiving one another to which they are exhorted, cannot import their receiving one another ſimply to communion, but onely a receiving one another to a neerer and cloſer communion: how then can this be a ground for thoſe that are not in Church-communion together at all, to receive one another to ſuch communion?

Anſw. Very well, though that which is ſuppoſed in the objection, ſhould be granted. For that which is a ground of a further degree of communion, muſt needs be a ground of communion ſimply conſidered: a further degree alwayes includes and ſuppoſes the firſt. If it be lawfull for me to goe with one two miles, it cannot be unlawfull for me to goe with him one.

Againe, Conſider *Acts* 15. 8, 9. for further proofe of my propoſition; *And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witneſſe,*

neſſe, giving them the holy Ghoſt, even as he did unto us: and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. The queſtion was this; Whether it were needfull to circumciſe the believing Gentiles; a thing which ſome believing Jewes impoſed as neceſſary, not only to their owning them as brethren in communion, but alſo to ſalvation, *ver.* 1, 5. That by which the Apoſtle *Peter* would evince the contrary, is this: that God put no difference between them. If God made no difference between the uncircumciſed and circumciſed believers, then they ought not among themſelves: but God made none, but exhibited an equall teſtimony of reſpect to both, in giving the holy Ghoſt alike to both.

It is true the compariſon in outward form is not alike between the baptized and not baptized after faith, as is between the circumciſed & uncircumciſed believers: but yet there is the like reaſon why they ſhould make no more difference among themſelves, as to their owning one another as chriſtian brethren, then was to be made among the circumciſed and uncircumciſed believers. For if Gods purifying their hearts alike by faith, & his giving them his Spirit alike, was concluſive againſt their diſowning one another as brethren upon account of their differences then in being; then the like equall diſtribution of Gods grace and Spirit to perſons that are not, as well as to thoſe that are baptized after faith, is concluſive too againſt alike diſowning one another upon account of other differences now in being. I pray you let it be noted that the Apoſtles argument for reconciliation, is not fetched from the nature of the things wherein they differed; but from the tenor of Gods carriage towards them that did differ, in giving them an equall intereſt in his grace, notwithſtanding their difference: which in all reaſon muſt be of the ſame force to the ſame end now, to wit, the reconciliation of differing godly parties, though their differences are not the ſame.

Of much what like import is that alſo *Acts* 11. 17. *For as much then as God gave them the like gift, as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, what was I that I could withſtand God?* Theſe words are uſed as an argument to juſtifie

the Apostle *Peters* going into, and eating with the Gentiles: an action which otherwise was deemed as irregular, as the admission of godly Pedobaptists to communion can be supposed to be, and at which some of the circumcision, though believers, were at first offended, *Acts* 10. 28. & 11. 2. His argument constructively, seemes to be this; That if after God had given them an equall share in his love with other believers of the circumcision, testified by giving them the like gift of his grace and Spirit, (if after this) he should have continued the wonted difference in his carriage towards Jewes and Gentiles, he should have withstood God who now made no difference, but shewed the same favour to the one as to the other. To keep at a distance then from those to whom God drawes nigh in his speciall favour and gifts of his grace and holy Spirit, is to steer a course contrary to God; or a practice by which those thatare guilty of it withstand God. Is not this cleerly the doctrine of this text? And if so, what shall we then think of those separations that abound in our dayes of Godly men from Godly upon account of particular differences, when God in the mean time is alike nigh to both in his speciall and gracious communications, and holds communion with both? Is this to be followers of God as dear children? *Eph:* 5. 1.

Obj. But the case of admitting Pedobaptists to communion, is not the same with *Peters* going into and eating with the Gentiles; and therefore the lawfulnesse of the one, cannot be inferred from the lawfulnesse of the other.

Answ. No more was the not muzzling the mouth of the Ox which trode out the Corne, the same with maintaining the Elders that rule well and labour in the word and doctrine, 1 *Tim:* 5. 17, 18. Nor was the Disciples plucking the eares of Corne on the Sabbath day, the same with *Davids* eating of the Shew-bread, and the Priests slaying of sacrifice on the Sabbath, *Math:* 12. 3, 4, 5. and yet the generall equity and congruity of the things compared, made the legality of the one practice argumentative of the legality of the other. And so I say in these two cases of *Peters* going into the Gentiles, and of admitting Pedobaptists to communion; though in other things they

they differ, yet in this they agree, *viz.* in that *Peters* action had been as much ſcrupled by him (*Acts* 10. 28.) as this way of communion is by ſome; and likewiſe in that there is a like equall ſhare of ſpeciall grace vouchſafed by God to the differing parties now, as well as was then. And therefore why ſhould not this conſideration, ſerve to ſatisfie this doubt, and remove this ſcruple of ours, as well as it did theirs; and to cauſe us with *Peter* to think, that under ſuch circumſtances, a maintaining our former diſtance in this caſe, would be a withſtanding of God who hath taught us to doe otherwiſe, by his example of vouchſafing equall communion to both. Gods equall diſtribution of ſpeciall grace to parties that differ, ſeemes to be ſo good a ground of communion one with another, as ſwallows up and beares downe, all leſſer differences that ſtand in the way.

III *Argument.*

IF Church-communion between the Godly Pedobaptiſts and Anabaptiſts, be more for common edification, their difference notwithſtanding, then their ſeparation upon account of their difference can be; Then their communion is to be choſen before ſeparation, their difference notwithſtanding.

But the communion of ſuch is more for their edification then their ſeparation would be.

The reaſon of the conſequence why communion is to be preferred before ſeparation, where common edification is better provided for by it then by ſeparation, is taken from the end of ordinances and Church-order, and communion in theſe; which is edification. Edification is that for the ſake of which the work of the miniſtery (which conſiſts in the miniſtration of word, ordinances, diſcipline & order) is given and ordained; *Eph.* 4. 11, 12. 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. & 12. 19. & 13. 10. And edification is the marke at which all Church-tranſactions are to aim, and to which to be levelled, 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. *Let all things be done to edifying.* And the management of theſe holy things themſelves, muſt be regulated by their end, edification, to which they are ſubſervient; to be uſed, or their uſe ſuſpended; to be ſtrained

higher or lower, ſo as edification may beſt be provided for, *Mat:* 9. 14—17. *Mark* 4. 33. *John* 16. 12. 1 *Cor:* 3. 1, 2. Reaſon and Scripture teach us ſtill to ſubject the means unto the end: and is not the contrary prepoſterous? The holy reſt of the Sabbath in a ceſation from ſervile worke and bodily labour, was an ordinance of God: and yet when a ſtrict obſervation of this ordinance in the letter of it in ſuch a ceſation, did croſſe but one end of it, which was the bodily reſt and refreſhment of ſuch as were to keep it, (*Exod:* 23. 12. *Deut:* 5. 14.) then ſuch an obſervation of it, might lawfully be waved, according to Chriſts doctrine in the caſe, as I underſtand it *Mark* 2. 25, 26, 27. Spirituall gifts alſo, and in partioular that of tongues, were given for the ſame generall end as the ordinances themſelves are, to wit, profit and edification, 1 *Cor:* 12. 7, 10. And yet when the uſe of this gift by circumſtances in the caſe, was rendered unuſefull as to its end, *viz.* edification; the ſuſpention of its exerciſe was injoyned, 1 *Cor:* 14. 5, 28. So though regular Baptiſme, according to ones opinion in the caſe, ought indeed to be inſiſted on as prerequiſite to communion, where common edification among the godly may be accommodated and not hindered thereby: yet where a ſevere inſiſting on ſuch a regular Baptiſme in order to communion, ſhall croſſe edification by drawing on ſeparation of godly from godly, why ſhould not ſuch ſeverity there be waved?

Touching the Minor propoſition, to wit, that Church-communion between ſuch differing Saints as aforeſaid, does tend more to their edification then their ſeparation can doe, is eaſie to apprehend, upon a double account.

1. Becauſe union and communion between Saints and Saints, gives them an opportunity of a free and full trade in their gifts and graces, by which they grow ſpiritually rich. And therefore well doth the Apoſtle make the increaſe of the body to the edifying of it ſelfe in love, to depend upon the *joyning together of the parts*, and the ſupply of *every joynt*, and the effectuall working of the meaſure of *every part*, Eph: 4. 16. Whereas on the contrary, diſtance and ſeparation, deprives them

them of that ſpirituall commerce, and ſo tends to their impoveriſhing. Juſt as it is between Country and Country; when differences breake out that obſtruct their wonted trade, they grow poor upon it. Or as it is with the naturall body, which weakens, waſts and conſumes, when the nutrimentall intercourſe between part and part is obſtructed. And the ſad decayes among profeſſors ſince their many differences in opinion have multiplied their ſeparations, doth wofully experience the truth hereof. How many are fallen, and are dead upon this account? and how many more are ſick and ready to die? and ſhall we then for all this proceed on in ſo impoveriſhing and deſtructive a courſe!

2. Communion increaſeth love, and love edifies, 1 *Cor:* 8. 1. It edifies actively by inclining and diſpoſing men willingly and cheerfully to lay out themſelves in ſuch ſervices by which their brethren may be edified and comforted; according to that counſell, *Gal:* 5. 13. *By love ſerve one another.* And likewiſe by enabling them for edification ſake to bear burdens; that is, the infirmities and miſtakes of brethren, which are a burden, as is enjoyned *Rom:* 15. 1, 2. For *charity beareth all things, indureth all things,* 1 Cor: 13. 7. It edifieth paſſively too, by rendering the chriſtian applications of brethren, and acts of ſervice, the more acceptable, and ſo the more profitable; taking all in the beſt part: *It thinketh no evill, but believeth all things, hopeth all things, and rejoyceth in the truth,* 1 Cor: 13. 6, 7. But ſeparation breeds alienation and diminution of affection, more or leſſe, and ſo weakens endeavours of edification, and turnes them into another channell. For to what degree the ſpring of motion groves weake, to that degree motion it ſelfe will be ſlow. And to what degree love decreaſeth, prejudice, jealouſies, and evill ſurmiſes, will increaſe: and theſe diſpoſe perſons to ſuck poiſon from the ſweeteſt flower: and poiſon will not nouriſh. Therefore ſeparation of Saints from Saints, upon account of differences, is againſt edification.

Obiect. But *can two walk together except they are agreed?* their different opinions and different practiſes, will occaſion contentions, and thoſe contentions will hinder edification and

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comfort: and therefore communion on such termes, may be as much and more against edification, then separation.

Answ. I have sometimes thought so indeed. But

1. Two that are agreed in the most and greatest matters, may and ought to walke together, though in some fewer and lesser things they disagree. *Whereto we have already attained, let us walke by the same rule, let us minde the same thing,* with humble expectation concerning such that *in any thing are otherwise minded, that God shall reveale even this unto them, Phil:* 3. 15, 16. The 14 and 15 Chap: *Rom:* is cleare for this.

2. Whereas its said those differences will occasion contentions, and those contentions will hinder edification and comfort: That they may doe so through mens weaknesse, I grant, but that they must necessarily so doe I deny, and doe affirme that when ever such contentions doe arise between the godly, as doe hinder edification; it is from want of wisdome, humility and moderation, in one or both parties: and to what is objected, is no more an argument against the communion we speak of, then mens insidence to infirmities and Heathly mixtures in prayer, or any other holy duty, is an argument against the use of the duty it selfe. It is true, the difference among the Christians at *Rome*, did occasion through intemperate zeal, carnall contentions, despisings and judgings one of another, but it was their sin and shame that they did so; and that for which they were justly blamed by the Apostle, *Rom:* 14. Such unchristian distempers must be mortified, not indulged; prayed against, and not improved against a duty: for that would be but to justifie one fault by another.

Object. But for those that cannot hold Church-communion in breaking of bread with those that are not baptized after faith, yet if they can hold an occasionall communion with them in gifts and graces, in the word, prayer and conference, shall they not hereby sufficiently free themselves from the blame of hindering edification by their separation?

Answ. 1. Its confessed that those that goe thus farre, have offered faire towards the demolishing of the wall of se-

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paration, and ſo of freeing themſelves of the evils occaſioned by its ſtanding.

2. But though ſuch a partiall ſeparation as this, is not ſo much an enemy to edification as a totall one is, yet if ſeparation of godly from godly in the ſimple nature of it be a neceſſary hinderance of edification, (and whether it be not, judge by what's ſaid in my argument) then every degree of ſuch ſeparation, muſt to a degree be guilty of the ſame evil. Without all doubt this partiall ſeparation, is to a degree a hinderance to charity, and conſequently to the ſame degree a hinderance of edification. Though there may be much love between parties that come ſo neer together as to hold communion in gifts and graces, yet queſtionleſſe there would be yet more, if that which keepes them as yet at ſome diſtance, were alſo removed. Its well worthy conſideration, that the *Law of Commandements contained in ordinances*, which were the wall of ſeparation between Jewes and Gentiles, are by the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* 2. 15. ſtiled the [*enmity*] and the breaking downe of this wall, the *aboliſhing the enmity*. And how were they the enmity? but as they were a means of ſeparation; for ſo they were an occaſion of enmity between thoſe people. And does not this clearely let us ſee, that ſeparation as ſuch, is attended with enmity, more or leſſe?

3. Me thinks that which ſatisfies them to hold communion in gifts and graces, word and prayer, with their differing brethren, would lead them to ſatisfaction about the lawfulneſſe of communion with them in breaking of bread alſo, if they would but follow it. For doe they not by joyning in prayer with them, and ſaying our father which art in heaven, plainly acknowledge them to be children of the ſame father, and ſo their holy brethren: and if children of God, then believers in Chriſt, by which beliefe they are made the children of God: and if believers in Chriſt, then members of Chriſt; and if members of Chriſt, then of his body the Church; and if of Chriſts body, then that they have communion with him in his fleſh, & blood, and Spirit, and what can they acknowledge that amounts to more then this, by having communion with them in the Lords Supper?

Supper? Or have they any example or direction in Scripture to joyne with them in prayer, with whom they may not joyne in breaking of bread?

IV *Argument.*

IF ſeparation of Saints from Saints upon any account of difference that does not unſaint them, or render their Saintſhip juſtly ſuſpected, be voyd of Scripture-precept, and of approved Scripture-preſident, Then the godly Anabaptiſts and godly Pedobaptiſts, need not ſeparate one from another upon account of their difference about Baptiſme, (for all conſcience of duty, ariſes from precept or preſident.)

But ſeparation of Saints from Saints upon any account of difference that does not unſaint them, or render their Saintſhip juſtly ſuſpected, is voyd of Scripture-precept and of approved Scripture-preſident. *Ergo.*

That ſuch ſeparation is voyd of Scripture-precept and of approved Scripture-preſident, I take for granted, till the contrary doe appeare, which I never expect. We read of many differences both of opinion and practice, and of diviſions thereupon, that were [in] the primitive Churches; but of no approved ſeparations [from] thoſe Churches upon account of thoſe differences. There were indeed that did forſake the Saints aſſemblies upon a carnall account, *Heb:* 10. 25. that *went out from them, becauſe they were not of them,* 1 Joh: 2. 19. but they were ſenſuall, not having the Spirit, *Jude* 19. There were others not ſo bad that did not proceed ſo farre, that upon account of difference ſtood at ſome diſtance one from another; but how were they diſallowed and blamed for ſo doing? *Acts* 15. *Rom:* 14. & 15.

What is wont to be alledged for Scripture-precept in the caſe; I take to be impertinent, and to fall ſhort in prooſe of what its brought for. That's one in *Rom:* 16. 17. *Mark them which cauſe diviſions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoyd them.* 1. Theſe were not Saints which they were to avoyd, but ſuch as *ſerved not the Lord Jeſus,*

ſus, but their owne bellies, ver. 18. 2. The diviſions and offences cauſed by them, for the ſake of which they were to be avoyded, were not about leſſer matters, or ſuch offences as would conſiſt with Saintſhip; for it was ſo farre from being a duty to avoyd one another upon that account, as that it was their ſin for which they were blamed when they did ſo, *Chap.* 14. & 15. Or 3. if they were diviſions and offences about leſſer matters, for cauſing of which they were to be avoyded; then they were not to be avoyded for cauſing ſuch diviſions ſimply, (for ſo the Saints did which were to be received, *Rom.* 14.) but for cauſing them out of a carnall deſigne to ſerve their own bellies.

Another is, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 6. *Withdraw from every brother that walkes diſorderly*, &c. But to this I have ſpoken already in my firſt Argument, to which I referre you.

A third Scripture alledged for ſeparation, is, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. *Wherefore come out from among them*, &c. But this does not call Saints from Saints, but Saints from infidell Idolaters, as *ver.* 14, 15, 16. With whom ſome of that Church had communion in eating of their Idol-ſacrifices in their Idols Temple, 1 *Cor.* 8. 7, 10.

But that Scripture on which I finde ſome to lay the greateſt ſtreſſe, is, *Rev.* 18. 4. *Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.* From which they argue, that God hath of his people in Myſticall *Babylon*, to wit, *Rome*; and that having hereby given a call to them all to come out of her, if ſome will not at firſt obey the call but ſtay behinde, the reſt that underſtand it, and have a mind to obey it, muſt leave them behinde and ſeparate from them.

1. To which firſt I might ſay, the paſſage doth not neceſſarily ſuppoſe that God hath in *Babylon* a people that are by converſion actually his in Covenant, but a people that in obeying his call ſhall become ſuch. As when the Lord ſaid to *Paul*, *Acts* 18. 9, 10. *Be not afraid but ſpeake, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man ſhall ſet on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this City.* His much people, were not

those that did already believe, at least not all of them such, but such whom the Lord knew should believe upon his continuing to preach the Gospel there. In like manner when Christ saith, *John* 10. 16. *Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voyce.* The saying of Christ doth not import that those other sheep which he calls his, were then his by calling when he spake those words, but were afterwards to become his, when he should bring them to heare his voyce.

2. Or secondly, if the words doe import a people that are Gods by call and covenant, that live in *Babylon*, then *come out of her my people*, &c. may import Gods call to them for a locall remove, though in no actuall communion with her, partly to avoyd the temptations of so wicked a place, noted in those words; *that ye be not partakers of her sins:* and partly to escape her Judgements, noted in those words; *that ye receive not of her plagues.* As God sometime called *Lot* out of *Sodom*, and his people out of *Jerusalem* at the approach of ruine to those Cities. And then the words will no more imply a Church-separation, then it would do for a man that lives in *Paris* to remove to *London*, for better opportunities of grace, as the late converted *Turk* did.

3. But thirdly, suppose the words to be understood of such as are actually Gods people, even then while as yet they are in superstitious communion with such Idolaters or others in *Babylon*, as are none of Gods people by Gospel call and Covenant grace; yet this would be no ground for to withdraw from or deny communion with a Congregation of godly Pedobaptists that are separated in their communion from the ungodly of the world, (which is our case) because the case between the other and them wholly differs.

1. For first if there should be any in the assemblies of the *Romane Babylon*, that in the midst of so much wood, hay and stubble of errour and superstition, should have so much of the gold, silver, and precious stones of sound doctrine, right faith, and true grace, as would denominate them Gods people, yet these are in their Church-worship, involved among persons

that

that are in some of their tenents hereticall, in their worship idolatrous, and in their conversations openly profane. Which are such causes of non-communion, as are not to be found in the well reformed Congregations of godly Pedobaptists, whether Presbyteriall, or Independent. And therefore where there is not the same or like cause of separation, there cannot be the same or like reason for separating. In the one you cannot hold communion with the supposed good, but you must have communion also with the intollerably bad; and there the separation is properly and directly from the intollerably bad, and but accidentally from the supposed good. But what is this to a separation from or a non-communion with reformed Congregations, where no such intollerably evill-doers are to be found, from whom to withdraw or with whom to deny communion, would be a separation properly, directly, and only from the visibly good.

2. The case differs as much or rather much more, in respect of the communion it selfe. For in the Popish Assemblies, you cannot have communion in the Lords Supper it selfe (which is so essentiall a part of Church-communion) but you must communicate in the superstition or Idolatry which is with them inseparably annexed to it: *He that eats of the sacrifice is partaker of the Altar*, 1 Cor: 10. 18. But in having communion with reformed Congregations of the Pedobaptists, there's no necessity of an actuall participation in any one act of superstition. For he that deemeth the sprinkling or baptizing of an infant superstitious, may suspend his communion in that action, and yet continue it in others. As our Lord Christ kept the Passeover a day or two before the generality of the Jewes, (for the day of his crucifixion, was but the day of their preparation to the Passeover, *Joh:* 19. 14, 31.) they missing (as is conceived) the punctuall time of that feast; and yet denyed not his communion with them in other things wherein he and they were agreed. So that neither doth this *Rev:* 18.4. any wayes appeare to me a sufficient ground for one godly Congregation to deny communion with another, upon account of the difference before specified, or any other like it.

Object. But for such as are baptized after faith, to hold communion with such who have not been baptized otherwise then by infant sprinkling, is as voyd of Scripture-precept and Scripture-president, as is the separation of godly from godly: and why then is not the one as unlawfull as the other?

Answ. 1. Be it so as to particularity of precept or example: yet in this or any like case when any are in doubt between two difficulties, the way to come to a satisfactory resolution which to incline to, is by discovering by which the peace, love, and edification of the Church of Christ, will be best promoted; for these ought to sway us and carry us along with them, in all such cases wherein we are not bound to the contrary by an expresse rule. *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you are called in one body,* Col: 3. 15. Let it rule, reigne, or umpire, as the word is rendered. It must then have the casting voyce when things otherwise are in an equapoiz; and as a King give Lawes in such cases. The law of love is the royall Law, *James* 2.8 it hath the soveraigne and commanding power over inferiour lawes of particular order. And edification must over-rule us in many cases, as being that to which Church-ordinances and order are subordinate; as I shewed in my former argument. *Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and the things by which we may edifie one another, Rom:* 14. 19. If we are in doubt which to follow, this or that; here's our direction.

But now that the communion of differing Saints, notwithstanding their difference when managed with a christian spirit, tends abundantly more to peace, love and edification, then their separation for their difference sake would doe, is a thing that shines by its own light, and is evidenced in my former argument.

2. Though we have no particular precept or president in the case objected, yet we have generall rules that reach it, and such are they already named, and so is *Mat:* 12. 7. *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* Gal: 6. 2. *Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.* Rom: 14. *Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye.* Rom: 15. *We that are strong, ought to bear*

bear the infirmities of the weake, and not to pleaſe our ſelves: and to receive one another, as Chriſt hath received us, ver: 7. 1 Cor: 14. 26. *Let all things be done to edifying*; and the like: the face of which is ſet againſt dividing, ſeparating, and rejecting one another for ſuch errours as are but Saints infirmities, amongſt which the miſtakes about Baptiſme in controverſie between them, muſt certainly be numbered.

V *Argument.*

That practice which neceſſarily makes a ſchiſme in the body of Chriſt, is ſinfull.

But ſeparation of Saints from Saints upon account of difference between them, neceſſarily makes a ſchiſme in the body of Chriſt. Therefore &c.

That to make a ſchiſme in the body of Chriſt, is a ſinfull act in whomſoever found, is evident, becauſe its contrary to the declared will of the Lord, who would have no ſchiſme in the body, 1 *Cor:* 12. 24, 25. *God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked; that there ſhould be no ſchiſme in the body: but that all ſhould be one*, Joh: 17. 21. *Keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, Eph: 4. 3.

That for Saints to divide and ſeparate from Saints, is to make a ſchiſme in the body of Chriſt, is eaſie to underſtand. For thoſe that are indeed Saints, are all of them of the body of Chriſt, what ever their difference otherwiſe may be, and therefore for them to ſeparate and rend one from another, is ſurely to make a ſchiſme in the body, if any thing be. And ſo they doe more eſpecially, when they refuſe communion with one another, in the Supper of the Lord. For as by their mutuall communion therein, their oneneſſe is in ſpeciall ſignified and profeſſed, 1 *Cor:* 10. 17. ſo by their deniall of communion therein, that oneneſſe is denied: and what's this but ſchiſme in the formality of it?

Object. When the godly are in their communion, mixt with others that are ungodly, and ſuch with whom communion is for-

forbidden, then either to withdraw from such godly ones, is no sinfull schisme; or else other of the Saints are necessitated to sin, either in withdrawing from the Saints in such mixt assemblies, or in holding communion with those with whom communion is forbidden; which is an absurdity not to be imagined.

Answ. Such a separation is not made from the godly as scrupling their communion, could they have communion with them alone; but its made from those, communion with whom is forbidden, and for their sake only. And in all reason, the separation must receive its denominatien from the cause whence it proceeds, and so it is not a separation from those that are of the body, but from those that are not. But however, this objection is irrelative to our question touching the lawfulnesse of communion between a godly Congregation of Anabaptists, and a godly and reformed Congregation of Pedobaptists.

Object. Though we doe owne the godly Pedobaptists to be members of Christs-body, yet withall because their visible Church-state and ministery, is founded in infant baptisme, we cannot but in that respect judge them to be of the whorish state, and our separation from them, is not as they are of the body of Christ, but as they are members of the harlot: and so our schisme from them, respects not their christian, but their harlot or antichristian state.

Answ. 1. When you owne the godly Pedobaptists to be of Christs body, it is because they are visibly so, for upon no other account can they be knowne or acknowledged to be so. And I would have it seriously considered, whether it be not a contradiction to grant them to be members of Christs body, and yet to affirme them to be members of the harlot: and whether its possible for them to be of the Christian and Antichristian state, both at once. No man can serve two Masters that are contrary, *Mat.* 6. 24. No more sure can one be a member of two opposite bodyes at once. As by the same actions by which a man makes himselfe a friend of the world, he makes himselfe an enemy to God, *James* 4. 4. So by the same actions

actions by which a man makes himselfe a member of the harlot Church, he (for ought I know) cuts himselfe off from the body of Christ, or true Church. And the reason is clearly this; because the mysticall harlot, when once she comes to be so, receives her bill of divorce from the Lord, by which the marriage-union and relation becomes dissolved, *Isa:* 50. 1. *Jer:* 3. 8. *Hos:* 2. 2, 5. And that which is true of the whole in this case, is true of every part, the wholenesse only excepted: if the harlot be under divorcement as such, then all that make up that harlot state are so. And therefore whilst you acknowledge them members of Christs body, you cannot rationally repute them of the whorish state.

2. It is not every erronious opinion or superstitious practice that is found amongst them of the whorish state, that will denominate all those to be of that state that hold them, whilst they are otherwise loyall to Christ in the mayne; no more then every wanton or immodest word, looke, or gesture, will denominate a woman to be a whore, who is otherwise loyall to her husband in the mayne. The good Kings, *Solomon*, *Asa*, and *Jehosaphat*, were guilty of a little spirituall immodesty, in using, or at least tolerating the high places, but did not come under a spirituall divorce from God thereby, as others did, who did that and more; nor did they thereby become unfit to be held communion with in other regular acts of Gods worship. There's a great deal of difference between that which is essentiall to the constituting of a state, and other things which enter not the definition thereof. A bad man may doe many good things, and a good man many evill, by which neither are to be denominated good or bad, but by what they are and doe in the mayne, by what is predominant in them. So those that are of the whorish state, may hold many of the same truths, and doe some of the same good deeds which a sound member of Christs Church may doe, and yet not thereby be worthy the denomination of such a member as long as their corruptions in doctrine, worship, and life, out-weigh these. And its as true that some that are not of the whorish state, may be tainted with some of her errours and superstitions, which as to matter of constitution of

state,

ſtate, may be much over-ballanced by ſoundneſſe of faith, purity of worſhip, and ſincerity of life in the mayne. We had need then to take heed of being raſh and bold in judging ſuch to be of the whoriſh ſtate, upon account of ſome under-degree of ſpirituall lightneſſe, that our conſciences tell us, are in the ſtate of grace, and Spouſe-like, love Chriſt more then they doe any other. It would provoke even a good man to have his wife called whore, whom he knowes guilty onely of ſome leſſer faults: and ſurely it does no leſſe diſpleaſe the Lord to have ſuch as are eſpouſed to him, to be ſo dealt with.

3. It remains then that I adde one thing more for the compleating my anſwer to the objection, and that is; That communion with Saints that are in ſome things erroneous and ſuperſtitious, does not inferre a communion in the errour or ſuperſtition it ſelfe, whilſt you bear your witneſſe againſt it. This is plaine, otherwiſe the ſtrong muſt have been guilty of the errour and ſuperſtition of the weak Saints in the Church at *Rome*, by holding that communion with them to which the Apoſtle preſſed them, *Rom:* 14 and 15 Chapters. Elſe the few names in *Sardis* alſo, could not have kept their garments undefiled in holding communion with perſons ſo much defiled, as the reſt there were, which yet they did, *Rev:* 3.4. It followes then, that ſuch involuntary errours in perſons as doe conſiſt with the viſibility of true grace, doe not render communion with them unlawfull, in ſuch things which are not of themſelve unlawfull: we may hold communion with them in their graces, and in their duties, though not in their errours. Though you may and ought to withdraw your communion in ſuch acts wherein you are ſure they have not communion with Chriſt, yet you may not doe ſo in thoſe in which you know they have.

VI *Argument.*

IF the godly Anabaptiſts, doe hold communion with the godly Pedobaptiſts, in that which is ſignified by breaking of bread in the Lords Supper, Then it is not unlawfull but their duty for them to hold communion in breaking of bread it ſelfe which is the ſigne.

But

But the godly Anabaptiſts and godly Pedobaptiſts, doe hold communion one with another in that which is ſignified by breaking of bread in the Lords Supper. Therefore &c.

That which is ſignified by the uſe of the bread and cup in the Lords Supper, is ſhewed by the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor:* 10. 16. to wit, communion in the body and blood of Chriſt. And that the godly of both ſorts, to wit, of Pedobaptiſts and Anabaptiſts have communion by faith in the body and blood of Jeſus Chriſt, eating the ſame ſpirituall meat, and drinking the ſame ſpirituall drink, I think will not be denyed, and therefore needs no proofe. But that which requires a further demonſtration, is the Major propoſition. The reaſon then why its not unlawfull but a duty for thoſe to hold communion in the ſigne, that have communion in the ſubſtance, or thing ſignified, is

1. Becauſe ſo to doe anſwers the end of the ordinance: whereas a denyall of communion in the ſigne where it is held in ſubſtance, would croſſe the very end of the ordinance. The ſigne is ordained but for the thing ſake unto which it does relate: the outward communion in the ſigne bread and wine, is appointed to ſignifie and increaſe the communicants inward and ſpirituall communion in the body & blood of Jeſus Chriſt, and their unity thereby, 1 *Cor:* 10. 16, 17. And therefore where the thing to be ſignified is in being, (which is communion in Chriſts body and blood) there to deny the uſe and enjoyment of the meanes appointed by God to ſignifie it, (to wit, communion in the Supper) would be to croſſe the very end of that ordinance. If partners that have a joynt ſtock in trade, and ſo a joynt intereſt in it, ſhould refuſe to acknowledge and declare to each other their reſpective intereſts, by ſuch ſignes as are cuſtomary among men in ſuch caſes, it would be accounted a great piece of injuſtice. And is it any leſſe then a piece of ſpirituall injuſtice for thoſe that have a joynt intereſt in Chriſts body and blood, to refuſe to acknowledge and declare it to each other, and before all, by ſuch a ſigne which the Lord hath appointed for that purpoſe?

2. Becauſe mens right to the ſigne, proceeds from their right to the thing ſignified. As thoſe that have a right to ſuch

or ſuch an eſtate in land, have thereby a right to the deeds and evidences by which ſuch a right is to be declared, ſo thoſe that have a right to the body and blood of Chriſt in their ſaving effects, have thereby right to the Lords Supper, as an evidence appointed by God by which ſuch their right is to be declared and acknowledged. And therefore as a detaining of ſuch evidence from him who by having right to the Land, hath right to the evidence, would be an injury; even ſo a detaining the Lords Supper from him who by having right to the body and blood of Chriſt, hath right to the Lords Supper as an evidence and ſigne thereof, would be an injury likewiſe. And as ſpirituall things are of more value then temporall, ſo an injury in them is greater then an injury in the other.

3. Its againſt common reaſon and equity to grant them to have communion with us in the greater and better part, and to deny it them in the leſſe; the greater ſtill including the leſſe. But to be partakers of like precious faith with us, and by that to eat of that *fleſh which is meat indeed*, and *to drink of that blood which is drink indeed, and to drink into one and the ſame Spirit*; as both ſorts of godly ones doe, is certainly to have, hold, and enjoy communion together in the greater, better, more ſpirituall and more ſubſtantiall part of it; and therefore to deny it in the outſide and letter of it, which is farre leſſe conſiderable, ſeemes very incongruous and contradictious.

An

An exhortation to unity, peace, and concord.

HAving ſaid this much by way of Argument touching the unlawfulneſſe of Separation, and the lawfulneſſe of communion between Saints, though of different perſwaſion; I ſhall now adde a little more to quicken the brethren on both ſides, to unity, concord, and peace; which have been too long divided and too much eſtranged one from another. For this end let it be ſeriouſly conſidered;

1. That the heart and ſoule of our Lord Jeſus, is exceedingly ſet upon the unity, not onely of the Saints of this or that particular and different perſwaſion, but of all thoſe that believe through his Apoſtles word, how different ſoever in opinion and perſwaſion, they otherwiſe may be. And this appeares; 1. In that Chriſt made it matter of his ſolemne addreſſe unto his father, that ſo it might be. *John* 17. 20, 21. *Neither pray I for theſe alone, but for them alſo which ſhall believe on me through their word: that they* [all] *may be one.* 2. In that it was the ſubject matter of one of his laſt requeſts to his father now he was about to leave the world. Thoſe things uſually are moſt upon the heart, which men bring forth at ſuch a time when they are ready to die. 3. And which is yet more: among all the things which concerne the Saints here in this world, he ſingles out this of their unity, as that which was moſt upon his heart to form into a ſolemne requeſt unto his father on their behalfe. There are upon the matter but two things which he prayed for in the behalfe of all thoſe that ſhould believe, contained in that part of his prayer which you have from *v.* 20. to the end of *John* 17. the one of which reſpecting their future condition in the other world; and that is that they might be with him where he is, to behold his glory: and the other reſpecting their preſent condition in this world; and that is that

they all might be one. So then although there be many other things wherein the comfort and welfare of the Saints in this world are concerned, yet their unity and agreement is that which Christ ſingles out from among all the reſt, as being moſt upon his heart, and as one would think, ſhould therefore be that thing wherein their peace and welfare is moſt concerned. 4. Its further moſt worthy obſervation, that among all the things which Christ prayed for in this prayer recorded in *John* 17. he does not inſiſt ſo much upon any one thing as this of unity among the Saints. And therefore you have him redoubling this petition againe and againe, and mentioning it a third and a fourth time alſo, as you may ſee in *ver.* 11, 21, 22, 23. As if his heart were ſo full of it, as that it could not be all brought out at once but by degrees: it was out of the abundance of his heart, that he abounded ſo much in this one petition.

And is the heart of our dear Lord ſo much in it? and ſhall not the heart of every one to whom he is dear, be much in it too! Can you follow a better pattern, or write after a better copie? It is without all doubt that the more you have of the ſame Spirit that dwelt in him, the more it will enlarge your hearts this way in conformity to this heavenly temper that was ſo eminent in him. And the more you ſhall finde your hearts run out to this thing, as Chriſts did, the more ſhall you be inriched with an aſſurance of your dwelling in him and he in you, 1 *John* 4. 13. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, becauſe he hath given us of his Spirit.* And what way is there in all the world for you to indeer your ſelves to Chriſt more, then in being found according to his owne heart? Doe not good diſpoſition'd parents, take moſt pleaſure in thoſe children that are moſt of their own temper? and ſo does Chriſt in thoſe that are moſt like him. How great a praiſe was it to *David* to be ſaid to be a man after Gods owne heart! (*Acts* 13. 22.) and I am ſure it will be your glory in this, to be men after Chriſts owne heart. Did Chriſt pray and pray ſo earneſtly for this thing, that all that are believers ſhould be one? why then let thoſe that would be like him, and profeſſe to be learners

ners of him, doe ſo too. And not onely pray, but earneſtly endeavour by uſe of meanes to bring that to paſſe which we earneſtly pray for. If men were but as willing and deſirous to pleaſe Chriſt Jeſus, and to gratifie the deſire of his ſoule in this, as they ſeeme to be in ſome other things towards which he hath given no ſuch apparent manifeſtation of his affection, we ſhould certainly have things at another paſſe among the people of God, then now they are. And I pray you why ſhould we not be moſt for that in which he moſt delights?

2. And therefore conſider further, that love and kindneſſe and cleaving of heart, and affection of Saints to Saints, is that which Chriſt among other things moſt deſires, as being that grace wherein he hath moſt abounded towards them, and by which they will be moſt Chriſt-like, and ſo moſt Chriſtian. As the greatneſſe of his affection to union among the Saints, was expreſſed by his praying for it againe and againe in the ſame prayer, ſo does his great longing after love among all his Diſciples, manifeſtly appeare by his fervent and importunate preſſing and enjoyning it againe and againe and againe in one and the ſame ſpeech or Sermon, and in that alſo which was his farewell Sermon when he was now leaving them and the world, wherein to be ſure he would inſiſt moſt upon that which lay moſt at his heart. And this he did with a note or ſigne of ſpeciall appropriation fixed upon it, [*my commandement*] as if that were more eſpecially his and had more of his heart in it then others. *John* 15. 12. *This is* [*my commandement,*] *that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Joſn 13. 34. *A new commandement I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another,* John 15. 17. *Theſe things I command you that ye love one another.*

And if Chriſts heart ran moſt upon this, they are in no wiſe like to pleaſe him, that by contending for ſome particular point, which hath not it may be the tenth (if any) of the evidence of his minde, will and affection in it, which this hath, doe make a breach upon and hinder this. It was ſaid, *Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, as*

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in obeying the voyce of the Lord? 1 Sam: 15. 22. And may be ſaid, hath Chriſt Jeſus any ſuch delight in your ſacrificing a great part of the peace, charity, and comfort of the Saints, upon ſome controverted order or doctrine in the Church, as he hath in obeying him in this great command of his, that carries ſo much of his heart in it? For them that think ſo, let them againe hearken to what he ſaith, *Mat:* 9. 13. *Goe ye and learne what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice. And to love him with all the heart —— and to love his neighbour as himſelfe, is more then all whole burnt-offerings and ſacrifices*, Mark 12. 33. And yet ſacrifice was more expreſſely commanded, then moſt of thoſe things that are the bone of contention among the people of God at this day. Love, mercy, and judgement, are the weightier matters of the Law, and therefore may by no meanes be thruſt out by thoſe that are leſſe, as too commonly they are. What ever goes up, to be ſure Religion and Chriſtianity goes downe when charity goes downe. Therefore [*above all theſe things*] *put on charity, which is the bond of perfectneſſe*, Col: 3. 14.

3. Adde hereto another very weighty conſideration, which is, That what ever knowledge you have of the minde of God, and what ever zeale you expreſſe for any truth of God, either concerning faith or practice, yet if while you hold faſt other things, you let goe charity, your knowledge, your zeale, though it were to the loſing of your life for truth, will profit you nothing. 1 *Cor:* 13. 2, 3. *Though I underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* And leſt you ſhould think it meant of that charity which conſiſts in relieving of the poore, and not of that which conſiſts in cleaving to and delighting in Saints as Saints, brethren as brethren; he ſaith alſo; *Though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poore, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing*, 1 Cor: 13. 3. All which neerly concernes ſuch to minde, that are more carefull and tender leſt ſome other controverted truth ſhould ſuffer, then charity, brotherly love and concord, ſhould ſuffer; and care not

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what rents and diviſions they make among the people of God, ſo that they may but propagate their particular opinion. *If there be bitter zeale* (as the Dutch tranſlation hath it) *glory not* of thy knowledge, *and lie not againſt the truth*, as if thou wert the Goſpels friend, when by ſuch a carriage thou art an enemy to it, *James* 3. 14.

4. Your contentions and diviſions, if you maintaine them, they will deſtroy you in your ſpirituall trade, and keep you from thriving by the means and opportunities of grace you enjoy. It was a ſad thing wherewith the Apoſtle charged the Corinthian Chriſtians, that when they came together to exerciſe themſelves in the holy ordinances of the Lord, it proved to be not for the better, but for the worſe, 1 *Cor.* 11. 17. But upon what doth he charge this dreadfull miſcarriage of their going backward in their trade, and of growing worſe and worſe by what was provided for their welfare? Verily it was their diviſions that was the cauſe of all this miſchiefe. *Ver.* 18. *Now in this that I declare unto you, I praiſe you not, that you come together not for the better, but for the worſe.* How does that appeare? *For firſt of all, when ye come together in the Church, I hear that there be diviſions among you.* Concluding that ſo it muſt be that their diviſions would occaſion their decay and loſſe under the richeſt enjoyments otherwiſe; for they abounded exceedingly with ſpirituall gifts, *Chap.* 1. 5, 7. *Chap.* 14. The truth is, they eat out the very heart of Religion: men may grow rich in a form of knowledge, and expreſſe a great deal of zeal for the out-ſide of Religion; and in the mean while be languiſhing in the very vitalls of Chriſtianity, while they live in diviſion and ſtrife: *For where envying and ſtrife is, there is confuſion, and every evill worke*, James 3. 16. This will be as a worme at the root of your tree that will keep it from proſpering, what ever coſt you otherwiſe beſtow upon it.

If then you have any minde to keep up Religion in heart among you, and not to have your wine to become as water, having loſt its heart and ſpirit: If you would have the Goſpel ordinances to yeild you their increaſe, and all your Religion

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not to degenerate into form: If you would yeild God an acceptable and pleasant fruit of all his cost, and not such as is starvie, harsh, and unsavory: If you would not *turn the fruit of righteousnesse into hemlock*: If you would be freed from such a predominant distemper, as will hinder your spirituall relish, and convert your food into a noxious humour, and subject you to a languishing disease in the midst of plenty; Then abandon contention, and lay aside division, and with a spirit of love, meeknesse, and peace, communicate your different thoughts, and patiently bear with a conscientious dissent.

5. If you would secure the Protestant Religion and Cause from being a prey to the lurking Papist, and from being swollowed up of Atheists, Libertines, Apostates, Quakers, by all which it is at this day sorely assaulted and dangerously beset, then unite heart, and head, and hand, to make one strength to withstand them, *that no man take your Crowne*. For your divisions incourageth them in their designes, invites them to attempt upon you, and prepares many to fall in with them. So that as long as you keep up your divisions, they will grow upon you, and get ground, and by little and little draw away your strength, and in conclusion over-master you, if by uniting you prevent them not: *A kingdome divided against it selfe, cannot stand*, Mat: 12. 25. And therefore if you shall so labour to maintaine one particular Fort, as in doing it you loose the whole Nation; I mean so maintaine a particular opinion in Religion, as by dividing about it, to endanger the losse of the whole; you will shew your selves (according to the proverb) to be peny wise and pound foolish: and will Christ ever thanke you for such a service?

6. The more you knit together in love for the great truth sake that dwelleth in you, the greater and richer [*assurance of understanding*] shall you have in the Mystery of the Father and of Christ. *Col:* 2. 2. *Being knit together in love, unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding*, &c. Being knit together in love, bears the relation of a means, to the full assu-

assurance of understanding, as the end. Its one thing to know what the Gospel treats of; and another thing to know assuredly that all that which the Gospel treats of, is true and is no lie: Many have much of the former, which as it is to be feared, have little of the latter. And yet some too, that have lesse of the former then others, but more love, have more of the latter then they. The Lord takes such pleasure in the close cleaving of the hearts of his servants one to another, as that he crownes it with this assurance of understanding: *rooting and grounding them in love*; and establishing them in the present truth. Hence I suppose it is that you have many who though they have lesse knowledge, yet having more love, stand fast in the truth, whilst others that have a great deal more knowledge but little or no charity, are turned up by the roores. Its therefore prescribed by way of remedy or prevention against *being tossed to and fro, and carried about by every winde of doctrine, and slight of men that lie in waite to deceive, that the truth be spoken in love*: that love, which is a uniting grace, accompany mens knowledge and profession of truth, *Eph.* 4. 14, 15. And truely the full assurance of understanding, and to have the minde and conscience established in the truth in these shaking and declining times, is a prize worth the running for, especially in so pleasant a path, as love and union of heart and affection is.

7. The more unanimous and harmonious you are, the more perfect you will be. You have much talke of perfection, and many pretend to it that are farre from it; but to be sure, its the mark and aime of every sincere Christian, and I think does consist in nothing more next our love to God, then in the Saints love and unity. This is the cry of the Scripture: *That they may be made* [perfect in one] *John* 17. 23. *Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one minde, live in peace,* 2 Cor: 13. 11. *Above all these, put on charity, which is the bond of* [perfectnesse,] Col: 3. 14. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is* [perfected in us] 1 John 4. 12. *And love is the fulfilling of the Law,* Rom: 13. 10. Which is more then can be said of any controverted opinion among the Saints: and

therefore you mistake your way, if in your pursuit of perfection, you turn aside from love and unity, and make a faction to cry up some single opinion which is not of the essence of Christianity.

3. The harmony and unity of the Saints, is a lovely object to behold, and an excellent ornament of your Christian profession, in the very taking with others. *Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* Psal. 133. 1. And while the believers *were of one heart, and of one soule, great grace was upon them all: and the Lord added to the Church daily, such as should be saved,* Acts 4. 32, 33. & 2. 47. Which cannot be said of any particular opinion extra-essentiall to Christianity: and therefore there's not that weight to be laid on it, as is to be in preserving the harmony, unity, and community of the Saints. But alas the contrary, works the quite contrary effect of disgrace and disparagement to our holy profession, and rendring it and the friends of it, lesse desireable; of which these dayes afford us more of the experience, then of the lovely, beautifull, and desireable effects of the Saints harmony.

9. If you prize your comfort, prize agreement: for those that are living and not dead or benumb'd members of Christs body, cannot but be pained with the rending of one member from another of that body of which they are: *If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it*, 1 Cor: 12. 26. Was it not a sorrowfull sight to see the man in *Mark* 5. 5. cutting himselfe with stones, and an argument that he was possessed with an evil spirit? Every one will grant it. And pray you how much lesse dolefull is it to see the Saints, children of the living God, cutting and wounding themselves; for so they doe, when they cut and wound one another; for they are *members one of another*, Rom: 12. 5. Alas, how unnaturall is it! for *who ever hated his owne flesh?* Eph: 5. 29. Certainly where thus it is, its an argument they are under a spirituall frenzie and madnesse, and so are objects of very great comisseration, and are an occasion of much trouble and disturbance in their Fathers house. But O the *comfort of love*, (as the

the Apoſtle phraſeth it, *Phil:* 2. 1.) the pleaſure of peace, and the delight of harmony; like a well tuned Inſtrument, where there is no Jarring. *Behold how good and how* [*pleaſant*] *a thing it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.* Its not onely good and profitable, but pleaſant and comfortable alſo, *Pſal:* 33. 1. A great part of a Chriſtians comfort in this world, lies in his communion with Saints. *David* ſaith, *The Saints and excellent, were all his delight*, Pſal: 16. 3. And therefore a breach in this, muſt needs make a great breach upon a Chriſtians comfort.

10. The more you are for union and reconciliation, and making of peace, the more you will be like God, whoſe infinite goodneſſe and grace inclines him to ſeeke after thoſe that are at a farre greater diſtance from him, then any of the Saints are from one another: *He is in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelfe*, 2 Cor: 5. 19. Yea this is that *good pleaſure which he hath purpoſed in himſelfe, that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſſe of times, he might gather together in one, all things in Chriſt, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him*, Eph: 1. 9, 10. Sin had divided and ſcattered his creatures in their affections as well from one another as from him; but the ſoule of the Almighty was ſo ſet upon their reconciliation and re-union, that he ſends his Son Jeſus Chriſt in due time, to gather them together into one in Chriſt as their common head. And for that end alſo he appointed the miniſtry, and from time to time furniſheth them with gifts, Firſt, to perſwade men to be reconciled unto God, (2 *Cor:* 5. 19.) and then to bring them all to unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, *Epheſ.* 4. 11, 12, 13. This God hath done to procure reconciliation and peace. And therefore *bleſſed are the peace-makers, for they ſhall be called the children of God*, Mat: 5. 9. They whoſe hearts, and heads, and hands, are in it, that labour at it with deſire to effect it, to bring men, eſpecially the Saints to termes of peace and good agreement, they tread in their fathers ſteps, follow the ſame work, deſigne, affect, and labour at the ſame thing; and therefore well may they be cal-

led his children; *and followers of God as deare children*, Ephes. 5. 1. And being his children, come under a great blessednesse indeed, having such a father, whose affection and power for their advancement, hath no bounds but what an infinite wisdome sets. And truely if this will not set our hearts on fire to be at this worke, I know not what will. If then you desire to make good unto your owne soules the evidence of your Son-ship and relation to God upon the best termes, it will not be enough for you to be your selves perswaded to reconciliation and agreement with your dissenting brethren, but to be active and busie in procuring it in others where its wanting. For otherwise though you may be peace-keepers, yet you will have little to denominate you [*peace-makers.*]

11. Its the way to have God with you and delight in you. He is so great a lover of peace and concord, that he will alwayes make one at this work; you shall be sure to have his company and presence, both whilst you abide in it, and when you lift up your heart, hand, and tongue to promote it. *Live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you*, 2 Cor. 13. 11. Such shall have God with them as a God of peace, speaking peace to them, evidencing himselfe to be at peace with them. I appeal to their consciences who have knowne the difference of living in a divided state, and of living in unity with all Saints, and of making themselves servants to so good a worke as to reconcile Saints, whether they have not more inward peace from God, and a richer testimony of his love in the time of their reconciliation, union and professed conjunction with all Saints, then they had in the time of their distance from many of them. Its most true that *he that dwells most in love, dwells most with God and God with him*, 1 Joh. 4. 12, 16. And how they can expect peace from God, that doe not live in peace with all those with whom God is at peace, I know not. Especially considering that Christ hath told them, that *if they from their heart, doe not forgive their brothers trespasses, that then neither will their heavenly father forgive theirs*, Mat. 6. 14. & 18. 35.

And

And what kinde of forgiveneſſe that is that can ſtand with punishing their brethren for involuntary miſpriſions, with rejecting them from their communion, and carrying themſelves towards them as if they were none of the ſame houſe, but children of another father, I deſire may be deeply pondered by thoſe whom it concernes.

The Apoſtle exhorting the *Epheſians* to this very duty, backs it with no leſſe then ſeven motives or reaſon, *Eph:* 4. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*, For 1. *There is one body*; and 2. *one Spirit*, *even as* 3. *ye are called in one hope of your calling*: 4. *One Lord*; 5. *one faith*; 6. *one Baptiſme*; 7. *one God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.* Each of which have very much in them to prevaile with the divided hearts and unpeaceable ſpirits of profeſſors, to lay aſide their warres and contentions, which are but the off-ſpring of their owne luſts, *James* 4. 1. & 3. 15. *1 Cor:* 3. 3. *Gal:* 5. 20. But I would not be tedious, and therefore ſhall not inlarge upon them, hoping that what hath been already ſaid, cannot but come home to the conſcience of all thoſe whoſe uncharitableneſſe hath not exceedingly hardened their heart.

Neither doe I doubt but that every one will be ready to acknowledge this which I have been exhorting to, to be every Chriſtians duty, and will profeſſe their great affection to unity and peace. But alas, experience ſhewes, that it is too commonly with this proviſo, or inward reſerve, *viz.* ſo as that they may have unity and peace upon their owne termes: unity in the truth, as they call it, and that truth, their particular opinion, upon which diviſion is built. The meaning of which is, that they would maintaine peace with all, provided that none would oppoſe them in their opinion, but ſay as they ſay: having that in their mouthes, *Jer:* 15. 19. *Let them returne to thee, but returne not thou unto them*; which they wofully abuſe whiles they apply it to leſſer differences. But if unity and peace, and communion too, were not to be had and held but upon ſuch termes, what uſe would there be, (in relation to different opinions in leſſer matters,) of thoſe many exhortations

tions of *bearing the infirmities of the weake*; *of long-suffering and forbearing one another in love*; of *bearing one anothers burdens*; of *not looking every man on his owne things, but every man also on the things of others*? Rom: 15. 1. Ephes: 4. 2. Col: 3. 13. Gal: 6. 2. Phil: 2. 4. A cordiall and peaceable communion, and forbearance are not inconsistent. Union, communion, and peace, must be kept and maintained upon Christians agreement in fundamentalls of faith and holinesse, when in the meane while, bearing and forbearing must be exercised in relation to those things wherein they otherwise differ. Which being the plain Scripture-road, its much to be lamented that so many who seeme zealous of the Scripture-pattern, should misse it.

Therefore I beseech all those that love the Lord Jesus, and that love to doe that which pleaseth him, that you suffer not those few and lesser things wherein you differ, to prevaile more with you to keep at a distance, and to deny your communion to one another, then those many, great and precious things wherein you are agreed, to bring and binde you close together, and freely to afford your Christian communion one to another. Is it reasonable or hath such a thing been heard of in other cases, that the minor vote should carry it against the major? Lay aside then all prejudice, stiffnesse, and selfe-willednesse, and count it your glory that you can seeke to others to receive you into closer communion, before they seeke to you. And in your prosecution of this work of reconciling distant brethren, doe not be beaten off, by others hanging off; but reckon it so choice a piece of generation-work in these dividing times, as that you can hardly lift up your heart, your tongue, your hand, to such another.

And you that are Ministers of Christ, who is *the Prince of peace*, and of the Gospel, which is *the Gospel of peace*, and whose work is *to guide mens feet into the way of peace*, and the end of whose calling is, to bring *all to the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God*: be intreated Reverend and beloved, to take heed of making the breach wider, and by any undue representations or aggravations, to frighten Saints of diffe-

different perſwaſions, from coming neere one another: but to perſwade to chriſtian moderation and forbearance, to a treating one another with a ſpirit of meekneſſe, and an over-coming of one another with love, and herein to approve your ſelves as patterns. And in ſo doing, you ſhall finde more peace in your owne ſoules, and procure more in the Churches, and finde a greater ſucceſſe in your Miniſtry, make better tempered Chriſtians, and ſet a more glorious Crowne upon the head of the Goſpel, then otherwiſe you are ever like to doe.

FINIS.